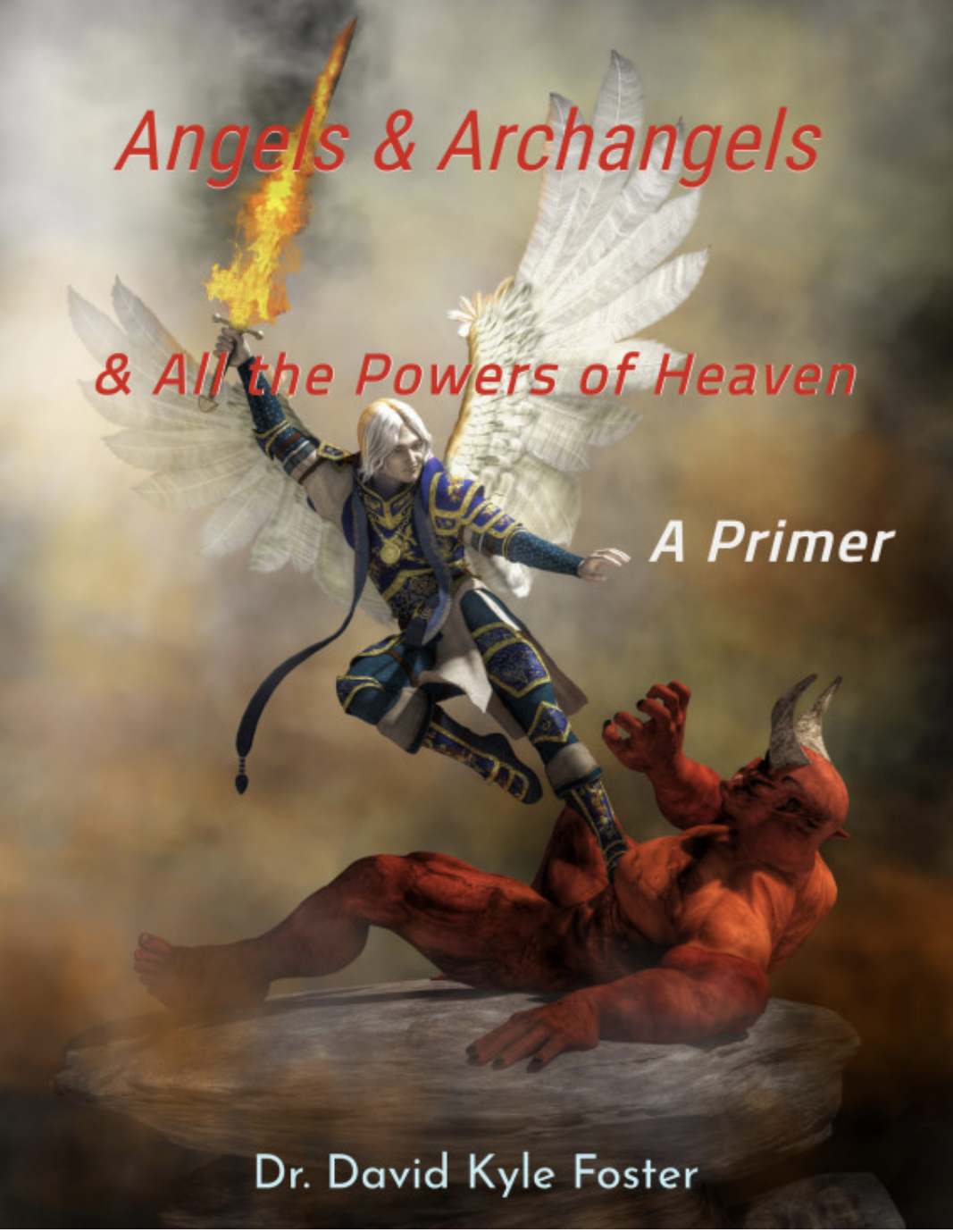
Angels & Archangels
& All the Powers of Heaven
A Primer
Dr. David Kyle Foster

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&

All the Powers of Heaven

A Primer

By

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Introduction

Did you know that according to the Bible, each of us has a guardian angel? Jesus told His disciples……

See that you do not look down on one of these little ones (children). For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father in heaven.
(Matthew 18:10-11)

Other scriptures that describe angelic protection of humans include: Psalm 91:11; Luke 4:10; Psalm 34:7; Hebrews 1:14 and Exodus 23:20. More on that later.

Then there was the time when an angel rescued the Apostle Peter from Herod's prison.

Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell.
(Acts 12:7)

Peter's chains immediately fell off and the angel led him out of the prison past several sets of guards (as though invisible) and through the iron gate of the city, (which miraculously opened for them). The angel then disappeared.

When Peter knocked on the door of the place where Jesus' followers were gathered to pray for his release, the servant announced that Peter was at the door, but they would not believe it, saying……

"You're out of your mind!"
When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel".
(Acts 12:15)

Throughout Scripture, we see reference after reference to angelic activity.

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.
(Hebrews 13:2)

I can clearly remember the day when after parking my car in downtown Nashville, I was approached by a homeless man who asked me for money. When I declined to help him, he broke out into the most angelic, loving smile that I had ever seen. It was otherworldly and I suddenly realized that he was an angel - perhaps *my* angel. Feeling bad that I had refused to help the angel, (who I came to believe was testing my love for the poor), shame filled my heart. Nevertheless, the angel kept smiling, and without a shred of judgment. It was a most unexpected encounter indeed!

Have you been entertaining angels unaware? We've all heard stories from

people who have been rescued by an angel, warned by an angel, or helped in some way by these unusual personages. One could dismiss the tales as fanciful imagination if it weren't for two things……

1. The number of "angel reports" by reputable witnesses is astronomical.

2. The authoritative, infallible and inerrant Word of God is unequivocal in its teaching that angels exist.

Do you remember singing this black spiritual song in Sunday school?

We are (we are) Climbing (climbing) Jacob's ladder (x3)
Soldier (soldier) of the cross.

Ev'ry round goes higher, higher (x3) / soldier of the cross.
Sinner do you love my Jesus (x3) / soldier of the cross.
If you love Him why not serve Him (x3) / soldier of the cross.

A description of the "Jacob's ladder" incident appears in Genesis 28:10–17:

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheva, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon the place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood beside him, and said: "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee back into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said: "Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not." And he was afraid, and said: "How full of awe is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."
(*Genesis 28:10–17 Jewish Publication Society)*

What we see in the story is a cadre of angels illustrating the message that wherever Abraham laid his head, God would be there employing His angels to serve His purpose for Abraham on the earth.

Note: Jacob's remark that he was not aware that the Lord was in that place should remind us that Jesus told His disciples that He would be with them always, even unto the end of the age (Matthew 28:20b). That, of course, would include His servant angels.

There are “fallen” angels, however, so it behooves us to study the subject carefully and in detail. These “fallen ones” actively oppose God and His plan for mankind.

Jude 6, mentions “fallen angels” as……

Angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home - these (God) has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the Great Day.

The darkest abode of the fallen angels is Tartarus - a horrible pit of torment that is the deepest abyss of Hades, (aka, Hell).

… God did not spare His angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell [Tartarus], putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment……yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord.
(2 Peter 2:4, 11)

In Jude 9, it goes on to say……

Even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

Michael was careful not to slander the devil, (because he is a celestial being), and instead simply repeated the rebuke that God had already declared.

One can only speculate what the dispute over Moses' body was about, but many scholars believe that Satan, the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10), may have resisted the raising of Moses to eternal life on the grounds that Moses had sinned against God at Meribah (Deuteronomy 32:51; ref Numbers 20:7-12), and murdered an Egyptian (Exodus 2:12).

We are the children of God who rule the nations. Old Testament angelology makes the meaning of this clear—the nations are currently ruled by fallen sons of God, who oppress their populations (Deuteronomy 32:8; Psalm 82:1–5). The psalmist recounts God’s judgment in his heavenly assembly, that these sons of God will die like men (Psalm 82:6–7)—they will be cast away and replaced when the Most High rises up and takes back the nations (Psalm 82:8).

In a certain sense, redeemed man and the angels of God are the immune system against Satan's viruses, and the antibodies to his destruction.

Who are These Celestial Beings?

There are roughly 175 references to angels in the New Testament (aggelos/ angelos). Like the Hebrew counterpart (mal'ak), the term means, "messenger". Fundamentally, the term describes a task performed by a divine being, not what a divine being is.
(The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible, by Dr. Michael Heiser)

Half of all people believe in angels. According to the Bible, in certain key moments of salvation history they……

• guarded the Garden of Eden from the newly fallen Adam & Eve (Genesis 3:24)

• told barren Sarah that she would conceive a child (Genesis 18:9-14)

• rescued Lot before the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1-29)

• told Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac (Genesis 22:9-18)

• wrestled with Jacob (Genesis 32:24-28)

• tested Job's character (Job 2:1-7ff)

• closed the mouths of lions when Daniel was cast among them (Daniel 6:22)

• announced to Mary that she would give birth to the Messiah (Luke 1:26-38)

• heralded the birth of Jesus on the hills of Bethlehem (Luke 2:8-15)

• comforted Jesus after He was tested by Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13)

• were present at the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:1-7; Mark 16:4-7; Luke 24:4-8; John 20:10-13)

• were present at the ascension of Christ into heaven (Acts 1:10-11)

• in the future, will cast Satan and his fallen angels and demons into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20; 20:1-3, 10; 1 John 3:8; Matthew 25:41; John 12:31-32; 16:11; Jude 6)

- sinned a great sin against God by mating with human women (Genesis 6:1-4; Jude 6)

Many believe that the offspring of such hybrid unions were the Nephilim (Genesis 6:4) - giants like Goliath, (1 Samuel 17:4-51; 21:9; 2 Samuel 21:16, 20; Numbers 13:32-33; Deuteronomy 2:10-12, 20-21; 3:11), as well as the gods of ancient civilizations like Greece & Rome.

Many also believe that the spirits of the offspring of the Nephilim are the demonic forces that tempt us every day. They may also be the spirit beings that have for millennia been masquerading as aliens from other dimensions, planets and star systems. Perhaps one major reason for God destroying the earth in the flood was to rid the human species of the corrupted DNA of the Nephilim (Genesis 6-8).

An article in *Wikipedia* notes:

All early sources refer to the "sons of heaven" as angels. From the third century B.C. onwards, references are found in the Enochic literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls (the Genesis Apocryphon, the Damascus Document, 4Q180), Jubilees, the Testament of Reuben, 2 Baruch, Josephus, and the book of Jude (compare with 2 Peter 2). For example: 1 Enoch 7:2 "And when the angels, the sons of heaven, beheld them, they became enamored of them, saying to each other, Come, let us select for ourselves wives from the progeny of men, and let us beget children." Some Christian apologists, such as Tertullian and especially Lactantius, shared this opinion.

The earliest statement in a secondary commentary explicitly interpreting this to mean that angelic beings mated with humans can be traced to the rabbinical Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and it has since become especially commonplace in modern Christian commentaries. This line of interpretation finds additional support in the text of Genesis 6:4, which juxtaposes the sons of God (male gender, divine nature) with the daughters of men (female gender, human nature). From this parallelism it could be inferred that the sons of God are understood as some superhuman beings.

The New American Bible commentary draws a parallel to the Epistle of Jude and the statements set forth in Genesis, suggesting that the Epistle refers implicitly to the paternity of Nephilim as heavenly beings that came to earth and had sexual intercourse with women. The footnotes of the Jerusalem Bible suggest that the biblical author intended the Nephilim to be an "anecdote of a superhuman race". Some Christian commentators have argued against this view, citing Jesus's statement that angels do not marry. Others believe that Jesus was only referring to angels in heaven.

Evidence cited in favor of the fallen angels interpretation includes the fact that the phrase "the sons of God" (Hebrew: בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים; or "sons of the gods") is used twice outside of Genesis chapter 6, in the Book of Job (1:6 and 2:1) where the phrase explicitly references angels. The Septuagint manuscript Codex Alexandrinus reading of Genesis 6:2 renders this phrase as "the angels of God" while Codex Vaticanus reads "sons". Targum Pseudo-Jonathan identifies the Nephilim as Shemihaza and the angels in the name list from 1 Enoch.

As to the idea that angels cannot reproduce……

At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.
(Matthew 22:30)

…it should be noted that Jesus is making reference to the state of men and angels "*after* the resurrection", not before. At that point, even human beings will not be equipped to have sexual relations because they will have wed Jesus Christ Himself - the very thing that sexual relations and the covenant of marriage prefigured. (See my booklet, The Divine Marriage for a detailed teaching on this subject).

The hierarchy of the heavenly host consists of two basic ranks of angels:

1. Military - Joshua 5:13-15 speaks of the "commander of the army of the Lord".
2. Priestly - Jubilees 2:2 and 1 Enoch 14:23 speaks of "angels of the Presence".

In Scripture, we read that angels had many important roles, including…

- God's messengers (Daniel 10)
- warriors who protect God's people (2 Kings 19:35; Psalm 91:11; Daniel 12:1; Acts 12:7; 27:23-25)
- ministers to God's people (Hebrews 1:14)
- those who wage battle against evil in the heavenlies (Revelation 12:7-12)
- those who continuously worship God in heaven (Revelation 4:6-11; 7:11-12; Isaiah 6:1-4)
- assistants of God during the final judgment (Matthew 13:37-50; 25:41)

Scripture also tells us that when Satan rebelled against God, he took one-third of the angels with him (Revelation 12:3-4a). Their fate will be eternal

judgment in hell (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-12).

And so, what are the good angels like?

They are agile and are often represented with wings to denote their swiftness. They can pass from place to place in the twinkling of an eye, without any intervening lapse of time. Their power and strength also are inconceivable. To sum up all their wonderful qualities, these bright spirits may be called pure and lustrous mirrors reflecting the infinite perfections of God……

Speaking of their ministry towards men, the Catechism declares: "To angels is committed by the providence of God the office of guarding the human race and of protecting men from any serious harm."
(*St Michael & the Angels* by Anonymous)

Old Testament Terminology for the Heavenly Host

1. “Spirit” (rûaḥ; plural: rûaḥôṯ)

Psalm 103:20–22 reads: Bless the LORD, O you His angels [malʾakim] you mighty ones who do His word, obeying the voice of His word! Bless the LORD, all His hosts, His ministers, who do His will! Bless the LORD, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!

The observation to make here is that the angels are referred to as “ministers” (v. 21). The Hebrew word thus translated is identical to that which occurs in Psalm 104 (“His ministers a flaming fire,” v. 4). Why translate malʾakim as “angels” in Psalm 103:20 but “messengers” in Psalm 104:4? The angels in Psalm 103:20 are also called “mighty ones” who obey the command of God, obeying His voice. “Mighty ones” (gibborim) is a term used of human warriors throughout the Hebrew Bible. It is nowhere else abstracted to speak of the forces of nature. It does not seem reasonable to make Psalm 104:4 an exception, especially since angels are described as men and as a warrior host in the Old Testament.

Further, other scholars have pointed out that another descriptor in Psalm 104:4, that God has made His ministers “a flaming fire” (ʾeš lahaṭ), is vocabulary used to describe divine servants in ancient Near Eastern texts.

2. “Heavenly Ones” (šamayim)

The Hebrew word šamayim occurs over four hundred times in the Hebrew Bible. In nearly all cases, the referent is either the visible sky, the space above the earth (Genesis 1:8; Deuteronomy 4:32; 33:26) or the spiritual realm beyond or above the visible sky in which God dwells (Psalm 115:3; Isaiah 66:1).

It makes perfect sense that members of the heavenly host should be called “heavenly ones.” Psalm 89:5–7 is a case in point: Let the heavens [šamayim] praise Your wonders, O LORD, Your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones! For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD?

Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD, a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around Him?

This passage clearly speaks of the heavenly host as a council or assembly in the service of Yahweh, the God of Israel. This divine council has many "holy ones" as its constituent members. In verse 5, these holy ones are set in parallel structure to šamayim. The holy ones are "heavenly ones." Goldingay comments on the meaning of šamayim in this context: Alongside the parallelism of "wonders" and "truthfulness" is that of "the heavens" and "the congregation of the holy," the latter giving precision to the former. It is the body called "the divine assembly," the assembly of the "gods," in 82:1. Job 15:15 is another example where šamayim should be understood as spiritual beings: "Behold, God puts no trust in His holy ones, and the heavens [šamayim] are not pure in His sight."

Psalm 82 - "God presides in the great assembly; He gives judgment among the gods."

3. "Stars" (kōḵeḇîm)

Since the members of God's heavenly host are referred to as "heavenly ones," it should come as no surprise that they are also called "stars" (kōḵeḇîm).

At the head of the heavenly hosts stands a "Prince of the army" (Joshua 5:14–15; Daniel 8:11), "LORD/God of hosts" (Yhwh ʾĕlōhê ṣĕbāʾôt) occurring in numerous biblical passages.

In Job 38:5–7, God asks Job: "Who determined [the earth's] measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang [kōḵeḇê bōqer] together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

"Sons of God" is a term for the divine members of God's divine family-entourage. The heavenly sons of God who watched the creation of the earth are described as "morning stars." In Isaiah 14:13, the hubris of the king of Babylon is analogized with that of a rebel who sought to displace the God of heaven: "I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God [kōḵeḇê ʾēl] I will set my throne on high."

4. "Holy Ones" (qedōšîm)

Two passages we considered above that designate the members of God's heavenly host as "heavenly ones" also describe them as "holy ones" (Psalm 89:5–7; Job 15:15). The term qedōšîm may be used to describe people (Psalm 16:3; Daniel 8:24), but it is more often used of spirit beings in Yahweh's service (Deuteronomy 33:2–3; Job 5:1; Zechariah 14:5; Daniel 4:17).

5. “Gods”/”Divine Beings” (ʾelōhîm)

The biblical writers refer to the members of God’s heavenly host as gods, lesser divine beings in His heavenly council or assembly.

Psalm 82:1, 6: God [ʾelōhîm] has taken His place in the divine council [ʿadat ʾēl]; in the midst of the gods [ʾelōhîm] He holds judgment.… I said, “You are gods [ʾelōhîm], sons of the Most High [benêʿ nêʿ], all of you …”

To summarize: Old Testament writers describe the nature of the members of Yahweh’s heavenly host with terms such as “spirits,” “heavenly ones,” and “gods, divine beings.” However, the more familiar term is “angel”.

A Brief History of Christian Thought on Angels

Justin Martyr *(mid-1st century A.D.) argued that Christ appeared as the "angel of the Lord" in His pre-incarnate form (or in the case of Abraham's visitor, in His incarnate form).*

(Doctoral Notes by Dr. Stephen Noll)

Origen *(early 2nd-century A.D.) understood human and angelic nature to be essentially the same because both are rational.*

(Doctoral Notes by Dr. Stephen Noll)

Origen taught that: *angels unite their supplications to ours - they carry our petitions to God and bring back to us favors and benedictions.*

(*St Michael & the Angels*)

Augustine (354-430 A.D.) Although his ideas became normative only for Western Christianity, Augustine believed that angels function as messengers and ministers. He wrote: *The angels have care of us poor pilgrims. They have compassion on us and at God's command they hasten to our aid, so that we, too, may eventually arrive at our common fatherland.* He also wrote that: *there are angels who preside over every visible thing and over each different species of creatures in the world, whether animate or inanimate.*

(*St Michael & the Angels*)

As to the fact that one-third of the angels rebelled against Almighty God, Dr. Stephen Noll writes……

…in the moment of creation Satan and his angels chose to worship a lesser god, their own angelic nature, rather than find their true worship in God.

(*Angels of Light, Powers of Darkness* by Dr. Stephen Noll)

Some of what we know about angels is found in the Apocrypha.

Some of the apocryphal (meaning, of unknown authorship or doubtful origin) and deuterocanonical books (considered canonical by the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches but non-canonical by Protestant denominations) were considered canonical by some of the early Church Fathers.

Augustine (c. 397 AD) believed that Maccabees 1&2, Tobias, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus were canonical.

It may surprise many Protestants to learn that the King James Bible included the Apocrypha until 1885 A.D. It included: 1&2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Prayer of Azariah, Susanna, Bel & the Dragon, Prayers of Manasseh and 1&2 Maccabees.

(Doctoral Notes by Dr. Stephen Noll)

Note: Martin Luther referred to the Apocrypha as books that are not regarded as equal to the Holy Scriptures, and yet are profitable and good to read.

Pseudo-Dionysius (c 500 A.D.) - was from Syria. He was the patron of angelology for both East and West until the late Middle Ages. He believed that there were nine triadic choirs of angels, the first three of which see and adore God directly…

1. Seraphim are thought to be representations of Divine Love (Isaiah 6:2, 6). Their name means "ardor", or the "burning" or "fiery ones". It is believed by some that Satan was a seraph (Ezekiel 28:14).

2. Cherubim are winged angels who enjoy deep insight into God's secrets. Their name signifies "fullness of knowledge". God used representations of them to cover the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:18-22). They are considered to be the voice of Divine Wisdom (Ezekiel 1:4-24; 10:1-22; 11:22; 28:14; Genesis 3:24; Sirach 49:10).

3. Thrones symbolize divine justice and judicial power. Their main characteristics are submission and peace. God conveys His Spirit by these angels (Colossians 1:16).

4. Dominions rule over all the lesser angelic orders and are charged with the execution of God's commands. They have a zeal for the maintenance of God's authority (Colossians 1:16).

5. Virtues (aka "Authorities") are known as the "shining ones". They carry out the orders issued by the Dominions. They exhibit strength to combat man's enemies and perform miracles to inspire people to deepen their faith in God. They also govern the seasons, the visible heavens and the elements in general (1 Peter 3:22; perhaps Acts 1:10-11; 27:23-25).

6. Powers confront and fight against evil spirits, to defeat their wicked plans (Colossians 1:16; 1 Peter 3:22). They have control over the stars, moon, seasons and the sun and provide grace and courage to deserving humans.

7. Principalities guard the nations and cities of the earth. They also announce divine things, govern men's souls and bodies, and

assist us in the attainment of our eternal destinies (Colossians 1:16).

8. Archangels deliver God's most important messages to mankind and are entrusted with the more important missions of men (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Scripture identifies three by name - Michael (who protects and defends the Church against its enemies and whose name means "one who is like God"), Gabriel (who announced the birth of Jesus to Mary and whose name means "strength of God"), and Raphael (who is seen in the Book of Tobit (chapter 5) curing a blind man, and whose name means "Remedy of God").

In the apocryphal book of *Tobit*, the Archangel Raphael refers to himself as one of the seven angels standing before the throne of God - one of a privileged circle who shares the greatest proximity to God. They are considered the highest princes of the heavenly court and are often assigned special duties by the Lord.

(Quotes & paraphrases from *St Michael & the Angels*)

Archangels guard great personages who have special work to do for the glory of God upon the earth. At the end of time, they will separate the righteous from the evil (Revelation 12:7-9) and be involved in casting Satan and his angels into hell.

9. Angels are ordinary messengers from heaven sent to men. From their ranks our own guardian angels are chosen (Matthew 18:10). They can be seen in Exodus leading and guarding the people during their wilderness journey and when they freed Peter from prison. They mirror the goodness of God toward us, ministering to both believer and nonbeliever alike.

According to Scripture, the angelic host always sees the unveiled face of God in heaven - the Beatific Vision. They offer up the praises, prayers, and the good works of mortals. They plead the cause of human beings against the devil, by offering in their behalf the precious blood of Jesus.

Angels are referred to in Hebrews 1:14 as "ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation". Never losing sight of God, they sing forever the song of love. Their will is ever one with His and they are at all times full of melody in His praise (Revelation 4:8, 5:11-14).

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 A.D.) His *Summa Theologica* contained one of the great, classical angelologies, (drawing on both Augustine's and Dionysius' thought). He argued that……

- Angels have neither bodies nor matter, citing the Greek & Latin version of Psalm 104:4……

"God makes His angels spirits" - which, more accurately translates from the original Hebrew…"He makes winds His messengers".

- Angels exist only one to a species since they have no body to separate individual members.

- Aquinas delineated the role of guardian angels, for individuals, families and nations.

John Calvin (1509-1564 A.D.) took a minimal interest in the subject of angels, noting that…

- angels are spiritual creatures who reflect God's glory

- some fell of their own evil and wage war against humanity

- there is a spiritual danger in dwelling on them, as that could divide the loyalty we owe God Himself

- they help God by strengthening our faith in Him

John Milton (1608-1674 A.D.) believed that……

- angels and men share a common material substance from God, the angel being in spiritual form and man being in corporeal form

- angels ate food and had sexual relations

- they serve to illuminate the goodness of human nature and reveal the freedom of human will

Per Dr. Stephen Noll: "Distinguishing between "angels" and "gods" in the Old Testament is difficult. The Hebrew word *mal'ak* means *messenger*. The Hebrew word *elohim* means *divine beings*, whether God Himself, angels or gods of nations. This is the larger category to which *angel* belongs."

Note: The word "divine" literally means "godly". A "divine being" in Christian parlance, is one who is either related to, devoted to, or who proceeds from God. Therefore, certain created beings can be called "divine". 2 Peter 1:4 refers to believers being able to "participate in (or partake of) the divine nature" - not in the sense that they become God, but that they can be made godly through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Some communions (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, etc.) refer to a process in believers whereby they become "divinized" or "made godlike". Even so, there remains a fundamental metaphysical difference between God and humanity. St. John of the Cross made this observation: "It is true that (man's) natural

being, though thus transformed, is as distinct from the Being of God as it was before." In other words, "divinization" describes *the effect* of the incarnation upon the nature of those incorporated into the body of Christ.

Dante Aligheiri (1265-1321) also believed that there were nine levels of angels and that their influence depended on their closeness to God.

Protestant vs Roman Catholic Beliefs

Protestant: does not accept the "Apocrypha" as "canonical" (books accepted as divinely inspired) and therefore does not accept as infallible, truth statements in the Apocrypha that go beyond what is imparted through the standard sixty-six books of the Bible.

Roman Catholic: accepts the Apocrypha and therefore its teachings about angels that go beyond what is found in the sixty-six books of the Protestant canon. It also accepts as authoritative church tradition and teachings about angels.

Protestant: With few exceptions, Protestants do not pray to angels, believing that angels do not share omnipresence or omniscience with God. They also point out that Jesus never called on or prayed to angels and when He taught His disciples how to pray, it was to God the Father alone (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2). Instead, a Protestant will ask *God* to engage one of His angels for a certain task.

Roman Catholic: Catholics are taught to pray to angels from childhood. A common prayer that children are taught to pray is: "Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here. Ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen."

The Synod of Laodicea in 343 A.D. decreed that only the names of the archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael could be used in prayers and forbade Catholics to pray to angels privately outside their churches. Prayer to angels not named in Scripture was again banned by a Roman Catholic synod convoked under Pope Zachary in 745 A.D. and by Church councils in the ninth and fifteenth centuries. In 1950, Pope Pius XII in his encyclical, Human Genesis, reaffirmed that Catholics were only allowed to use the names Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. In 1964, when Vatican II revised the liturgy of the mass, it eliminated Pope Leo XIII's prayer to Archangel Michael, which had been said at the end of each mass since 1886, because it did not refer to the Eucharist or the communion of Christ with His disciples.

(The Summit Lighthouse)

The Roman Catholic prayer to St. Michael will be quoted later.

Protestant: Most of the Protestants who believe in nine "choirs" (orders of rank) of angels, see them as tasks rather than a hierarchy. However, there are

a growing number of Protestants who see a *hierarchy* of angels described in Ephesians 6:12 (-e.g., rulers, authorities, powers, spiritual forces of evil). A much smaller number accept the Apocrypha and other Roman Catholic teachings on angels.

Roman Catholic: Though not a binding doctrine of the church, most Catholics believe that the nine choirs of angels describe a hierarchical authority.

Protestant: Protestants do not worship angels, as taught in Revelation 22:8-9. (See also Matthew 4:10 and Revelation 19:10.)

Roman Catholic: The worship of angels is also forbidden by the Catholic Church. Instead, they speak of “veneration”, meaning, “to regard with honor, reverence and respect”.

"The Divine Council" in the Old Testament

"Divine Council" is a term used by Hebrew Bible scholars for the heavenly host, the assembly of divine beings who administer the affairs of the cosmos under Yahweh, the God of Israel. All ancient Mediterranean cultures had some conception of a divine council, including Israel. However, Israelite religion's divine council was distinct.
(*The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*, by Dr. Michael Heiser)

It seems that some angelic beings participate in this heavenly council, including Satan (Job 1:6).

Even in some pagan religions, a "divine council" was an assembly of gods where cases were judged and military expeditions were authorized - similar to some earthly councils.

God presides in the great assembly; He gives judgment among the gods.
(Psalm 82:1)

The Hebrew words include: *God* (אֱלֹהִים Elohim), who stands in the *divine assembly* (בַּעֲדַת-אֵל *'ăḏaṯ-'êl*).

Who is like You among the gods… Let the heavens praise Thy wonders, O Lord, Thy faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones…… the council of the holy ones.
(Psalm 89:5-8)

In Psalm 29:1-2, the assembled *sons of god* are called on to offer a unanimous acclamation of the Lord's kingship.

Ascribe to the Lord, O sons of God; ascribe to the Lord glory and strength… Worship the Lord in holy array.

In Daniel 7:9-10 the council meets to decide the fate of empires:

As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; His clothing was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool; His throne was fiery flame; its wheels were burning fire.

A stream of fire issued and came out from before Him; a thousand thousands served Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.
(See also: Daniel 4:13-17, 24)

Per Dr. Stephen Noll……

It is unclear whether this "divine council" consists solely of God's faithful angels or whether, (as it may in Psalm 82 where He appears to judge the divine council itself), it includes gods of the nations who have been converted or impressed into the Lord's service: *You are gods… Nevertheless, you shall die* (Psalm 82:6-7).

Other references to this council are 1 Kings 22:19-22 *(…all the host of heaven standing beside Him on His right hand and on His left*); Isaiah 6:1-8 (*Who will go for us?*); and Job 1-2; 38:7 (*the sons of God shouted for joy at God's creation*).

National guardian angels appear early in the biblical account in connection with the divine council, (Deuteronomy 32:8-9), where it says that God gave the nations their inheritance according to the number of the sons of God. Dr. Noll writes: *God rules Israel directly through the Mosaic covenant and the nations indirectly through the members of the divine council ("the sons of God"* or *"the host of heaven").*

In Job 1-2, the heavenly host "present themselves" as if reporting in from various embassies. By contrast, Satan has been roving around the earth as a minister without portfolio - leading a shadow government (Job 1:7; 1 Peter 5:8).

Decisions made by God and his council required action. Scripture describes members of the heavenly host responding accordingly in a variety of ways.

In his book *Angels*, Dr. Michael Heiser describes the duties of the "divine council" as being……

1. Delivering Divine Decrees (Genesis 32:1; Psalm 91:11; 148:2; Exodus 23:20, 23; 32:34; 33:2; Zechariah 1:9, 19; 2:3; Daniel 4:13, 17, 23).

2. Explaining Divine Activity (Daniel 8-10)

"*While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding."*
(Daniel 9:20–22; 10:2–6, 9–14; Zechariah 1:9–21; 4–5).
Either God or His heavenly agents keeps a record of human behavior (Isaiah

65:6–7; Daniel 7:10; 10:21) or suffering (Psalm 56:8), or of those who belong to God or not (Exodus 32:32; Isaiah 66:22–24; Jeremiah 17:13; Psalm 87:5–7; Daniel 12:1; Malachi 3:16).

3. Executing Divine Judgment (1 Kings 22:19–23; Joel 3:11; Isaiah 40:26; 45:12; Judges 5:20; 2 Kings 6:8-19; Zechariah 14:5)

In succinct terms, the heavenly host is God's army, and he calls that army into service against his enemies, the wicked, who oppress his people and who abhor him and worship other gods. Isaiah 13:4-6, 10-13 is one example.

"The Divine Council" in the New Testament

(Revelation 4-5)

In the New Testament, the Divine Council of the Old Testament has been replaced with a loyal one: the true King, governing angels, and His college of twenty-four elders (revealed in Revelation 4-5). God's eternal rule is represented by the elders in heaven, whereas His reign on earth is in the churches.

The scene in the heavenly court is described in Revelation 4-5:

- God is seated on His throne
- twenty-four elders are seated on thrones surrounding God's throne
- seven spirits of God are before God's throne
- four living creatures are around God's throne who praise Him day and night
- twenty-four elders, falling down before God, cast their crowns before Him every time the living creatures praise Him
- a mighty angel loudly proclaims, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?"
- a lamb, looking as if it had been slain, stands in the center of God's throne receiving praise from every creature, who shout "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain…"
- ten thousand times ten thousand (100 million) angels encircle the throne, the living creatures, and the elders

Second Peter 2:10 and Jude 8 refer to the "glorious ones" (doksas). The term probably refers to divine beings of the council close to God's glorious presence, since Second Temple period texts describe such beings. These passages in 2 Peter and Jude speak of (human) blasphemers who rail against the glorious ones. The 2 Peter passage adds the note that angels, though greater than those human blasphemers, would not dare to do such a thing. The wording suggests some distinction between angels and "glorious ones" in rank (and perhaps power). For example, 2 Enoch 21:3 identifies Gabriel, widely described as an archangel in biblical and other Second Temple period texts, as one of "the glorious ones of the Lord".

In terms of the divine council hierarchy of the Old Testament, "angels" would denote a low-level task or job description (transmitting a message as a messenger), as opposed to ruling over a geographical region, something assigned to "sons of God" in the Deuteronomy 32 worldview.
(Heiser)

Dr. Michael Heiser summarizes the duties of the "divine council" as being…

- to contribute to Council resolutions, as part of God's heavenly bureaucracy
- to bear witness to God's decrees
- to assist in God's governance of the world
- to deliver His decrees and explain His activity
- to execute God's judgment, as part of God's task force
- to be part of God's heavenly worship team, praising Him day and night

(Angels: What the Bible Really Says About God's Heavenly Host by Dr. Michael Heiser)

Guardian Angels

It may be that everyone has an angel assigned to him. In Matthew 18:10, Jesus said of the children: "their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father in heaven". Psalm 91:11 also speaks of angels guarding believers……

For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

Modern testimonies are replete with accounts of angelic interventions of one sort or another for believers in need. Here are a few from people I know to be honest and thoroughly biblical (Used by Permission)……

Airplanes

In the course of our 25 years of ministry in Eastern Europe, we have flown very many times. On our first ministry flight, as we were about to take off, I remembered that I hadn't prayed about the journey. I also remembered that takeoff and landing are reckoned to be the most dangerous times of a flight! So I confidently asked God if he would send angels to look after the engines, wheels, control systems etc., not forgetting the pilot. Then, for just a fleeting moment out of the corner of my eye as we accelerated down the runway, I saw a figure sitting on the wing - and he turned to me, smiled, and gave a salute-type greeting! It was as if he was saying "Hi there, I'm here doing my job, you can just take it easy and concentrate on yours!"

I don't know how many ministry flights we've made over the years, but it must be well over a hundred, sometimes on "interesting" airlines to "interesting" destinations. But we've never had any flight emergencies, never felt remotely ill (except on an eight-hour Aeroflot flight where smoking was still allowed), and never arrived without all of our bags! We're so thankful for these "ministering spirits".

***

Healing

During one of the most challenging times of my life, God gave me an angelic visitation. My visit to the doctor was only a routine checkup. Unexpectedly, a large tumor was discovered in one of my breasts. The prognosis was not good. The doctor implied that I might have only a few

months. I was shaken.

A few days later, after a follow-up appointment, I entered an elevator at Memorial Hospital in Chattanooga. My husband, Mike, could not accompany me because of an out-of-state speaking engagement (he is an evangelist). We had agreed that he needed to keep his commitment that week. But even so, I kept thinking during my hospital visit, "I'm facing this all alone." It kept echoing over and over in my mind. I felt overwhelmed with sorrow, fear, confusion, and a lot of other negative emotions.

I don't remember seeing anyone in the elevator when I stepped in. So, when the doors closed, I was startled by a woman's voice saying: "Honey, you look like you need a hug." I turned to see an older woman with gray hair twisted and stacked on her head in a traditional "religious" style (like the women of the country church I attended as a child). She looked very proper, with a long red skirt below the knees, and a white blouse framed with ruffles at the wrists and a high ruffled collar around the neck, adorned by a red, shoestring bow.

I am not the kind of person who allows strangers into my "personal space." But before I could refuse her offer, she came over, hugged me and said, "You're not alone in this and everything's going to be OK." Though I had been extremely tense and anxious, I felt an immediate calmness come over me. I was amazed that her words applied directly to what had been going through my mind. As I stepped out of the elevator, I thought, "I need to thank her." So, I turned around and punched the elevator button to go upstairs. I visited every floor. None of the nurses at their stations had seen anyone fitting that unique and unmistakable description. The valet in front of the hospital claimed he never saw a woman who looked like that. After running all over the hospital trying to find her, I concluded the lady had simply vanished after the elevator doors closed. My husband and I agreed: it must have been an angel.

By the way, at the time of this writing, it's been nine years now and I am still cancer-free. God really has been "with me" and everything really has turned out "OK," just as the angel foretold. What a mysterious way God devised to prophesy this outcome!

***

In a night vision, I beheld a man of God holding a scroll and an angel walked up and wrote on the scroll the following words, "HEALING IS AN EXPRESSION OF GOD'S LOVE." Up until that time, I believe I had a somewhat distorted view of biblical healing—that it was a Bible promise someone had to claim with tenacious faith in order to (in a sense) force

God's hand by making Him feel obligated to fulfill His own Word. Though there was certainly value in fighting the good fight of faith by holding fast to my confession, it was almost like a dry ritualistic formula. Then God showed me that He heals (body, soul, and spirit) simply because He loves —love that is indescribable and boundless toward His own and toward the world.

Immediately after that in the vision, I saw another man of God with his hands cupped around his mouth. He cried with a loud voice, "There are even some who will receive creative power." And the dream was over. I woke up with that statement ringing in my mind. Then the Holy Spirit swept over me and God spoke to me what would be necessary for the release of that depth of anointing in my life and it involved an act of great self-sacrifice.

I fulfilled God's mandate and the first night I preached after my time of obedience, I called "A Miracle Night." One lady came in with two twisted legs: one twisted from a birth deformity, the other from a car wreck. That night she painfully and slowly dragged her way to the front of the church. When I laid hands on her, she fell under the power of God and in a moment jumped up and ran around the church. That congregation exploded in praise to God. That was back in the 80s but just recently, that same woman got in touch with me on Facebook and told me that her legs are still healed and she is still walking. Wonderful Savior!

***

Vehicle Accidents/Breakdowns

My daughter, Hannah, and I were in a nearby town in a used bookstore. We returned to our truck in the parking lot, ready to drive home. The truck would not start. We sat there for a few minutes wondering what to do, whom to call. There was no one in sight in this small downtown area. I did what I thought I heard the Holy Spirit say, with very little hope of help. I put up my hood and got back inside my truck. Suddenly, and I mean instantly, there was this ragged looking "man" in an even more ragged looking blue truck asking if I needed help. I told him we needed jumper cables to jump off my truck. He seemed puzzled, scratched his head and said he didn't know what he had in his junk laden truck. He pulled out the cables, cranked my truck and left. He literally vanished. We were in a wide-open area and we neither saw him come or go. Before he left, he said you be blessed and careful. We sat stunned for minutes when we realized it had to be an angel. An angel unlike any other I have ever seen, and I have seen them multiple times!

***

One day I was driving alone in the country to a Bible study that I was supposed to lead. It was winter and the country road was snow-covered. I lost control of the car and slid off of the road heading sidewise straight down a bank into a large creek bed. All of a sudden my car just stopped before what seemed like an inevitable plunge into the creek bed. I believe an angel prevented that from happening.

Another time I was driving my brother's van, which I had borrowed, in a heavy rainstorm. As I applied the brakes in approaching an intersection, the van lost traction and began sliding uncontrollably forward. There was no human way that I was going to avoid slamming into the vehicle in front of me—and then my van suddenly stopped. I can only explain it as an angel intervening.

***

Emotional Strengthening

I was in turmoil, depressed to the point of suicidal ideation.

You see, I had come to acknowledge that I was homosexual. I was on a quest to find out what "being gay" was like. Up to that point I was told the only option for me as a person who was same-sex attracted was to "go gay." Well, I went to gay bars, gay parties and gay organizations and they had nothing that attracted me to "going gay."

Being same-sex attracted, I had given up, (with significant grief), the idea of ever being married to a woman.

So there I was a homosexual, turned off by everything that identified itself as gay. The option of being married to a woman and having kids was non-existent. It has been a great weight to have never been loved like I want to be loved and never being able to love someone like I want to love someone.

I was in the shower and the extreme weight of hopelessness was literally collapsing me to the shower floor. As my knees buckled under the weight of life, my thumb entered my mouth and I felt myself regressing into infancy. The present and the future seemed too much for me. I had to go back to where life was easy. It was the only option. Just as I was falling to the shower floor I felt large hands on my back - fingertips at my lower back and the heel of the hands at my shoulder blades. The large hands lifted me back on my feet and supernatural strength was imparted into my entire being. I finally had enough strength to go on and I did.

I went on to marry a wonderful woman and now have a daughter.

***

Protection

When I was sixteen, I decided to end my life because I felt unloved. Standing in the middle of the pedestrian bridge over Royal Gorge in Colorado, I began to hoist myself over the railing and a firm but invisible hand firmly pushed me back onto the bridge. There was no doubt in my mind that God was using an angel to keep me from dying that day. I would later go on to spend 40+ years in ministry.

***

Being part of the Vineyard really showed me at an early age the spiritual battle that we are all in and that we all face. Leah, my sister, had her own room. My brothers and I shared a room. We had bunk beds up against two of the walls. Leah did not like sleeping alone. She also had a poster of a Tarsier or something similar on her wall. At night the big eyes would scare her and so she would come sleep on the floor in our room between the bunk beds. One night I woke up and turned over. I saw an angel floating in the center of our room above Leah. It was clearly there to protect us. I was so scared that I hid my face and too frightened to look again.

***

I am a trauma survivor who has recovered from DID. Once one of my alter-identities told me that she had endured the trauma by watching the angel in the sky above her.

In my recovery journey from severe childhood trauma, I had some pretty heavy therapy sessions. Occasionally, when I came in for a session, God would allow me to see an angel in the room. It was very comforting, even though I knew that when I saw that, it usually meant that it would be a particularly heavy session.

***

Once I was in Germany presenting a seminar on Trauma Healing. A lot of unusual things were happening indicating that we were under demonic attack. The pastor interrupted the meeting to lead the group in spiritual warfare prayer. As he was praying, God opened my eyes to see a huge angel holding a sword up in the air right over where I would be standing to speak.

***

Ruth had been born 10 weeks prematurely in the eastern jungle of Bolivia and developed very slowly. She had been diagnosed with a mild case of cerebral palsy and was very slow to walk. She was almost 5 before she could walk on her own, so she was not steady on her feet and fell frequently, resulting in bandages on both elbows and both knees most of the time. On this particular Sunday morning she was playing with a mutual friend her age on the sidewalk and suddenly she darted out into the street right in front of a speeding oncoming taxi that had just come around the corner lickety-split. Her body was no more than a yard from the grill of the taxi. Then it happened. She was literally pushed out of the way of the taxi just before it would have hit her. She was carried with such force that her hair flew backwards. Her momentum was carrying her in the opposite direction, right in front of the taxi and she could hardly walk, let alone run. But there she was, safely placed by my side on the sidewalk. I hollered, "I just saw an angel!" I did not literally see the angel, but I sure saw what it did first hand. And I know they have been with us and our family in many "escapes from death."

***

Salvation

A cold February evening … resting in bed. As I lay there fully awake, straight ahead appears a small flame, like the strike of a match. Then the form of a figure in white standing at the foot of my bed— didn't see the face, it was like a silhouette. But the white robe yes!

Frightened, threw the bed covers over my head. Strangely I heard and understood the words, "Do not be afraid." At that moment, I felt a touch on my right side (no clue what that's about), but the pressure felt was real, in the physical. In my mind, I heard the words, "Not sure; not born again, my spirit dead." Still a little shaken, I slowly rolled down the covers and took a peek, but there was nothing. My first words were, "Lord, is that You? If it is, then I give You my life. I can't do much more with it." Right after, I heard the sound of music coming from the hall outside the bedroom door - angelic sounds… strings like crystal… crisp, fragile, pure. Within two weeks I had met my husband - God's gift and the love of my life!

Looking back, I've often wondered if that figure was an angel. In any event, totally lost in my trespasses and sins, God touched me that evening long ago. It was the first supernatural encounter, and wouldn't be the last.

***

Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) wrote: “Every soul is confided to an angel at the same moment that it is united to its body”.

The writer of the book, *St. Michael & the Archangels,* had this to say concerning some of the expanded range of angelic operations:

In the opinion of St. Clement, St. Gregory the Great, Origen and other holy writers, every country, every city, town and village, and even every parish and family has a special guardian angel. . . .. So, too, altars, churches, diocese and religious institutions have their own guardian angels. Every church has special angels to guard it from desecration and every altar has thousands of angels to adore the God of heaven and earth concealed in the most Blessed Sacrament.

Moreover, it is generally held that each human being has its own distinct guardian angel not assigned to anyone else. . . . The ministry of these guardian angels consists……

First, in warding off dangers to body and soul;

Second, in preventing Satan's suggesting evil thoughts, and in removing occasions of sin and helping us to overcome temptation;

Third, in enlightening and instructing us and fostering in us holy thoughts and pious desires;

Fourth, in offering to God our prayers and in praying for us;

Fifth, in correcting us if we sin;

Sixth, in helping us in the agony of death, in strengthening and comforting us;

Seventh, in conducting our souls to heaven… to console us there.

They see in their charges, souls of priceless value that were redeemed by the blood of God.

Guardian angels are animated with the sincere desire of procuring us a happy death. There is no means they do not employ to encourage us and to prepare us for it; especially do they encourage us to lead good lives…

We read in the lives of many saints that their holy guardian angels were visibly present at their last hour, comforting them in their final struggle, strengthening them against the redoubled attacks of hell, announcing to

them the hour of their death and giving them the assurance that they would be heirs of the kingdom of heaven. . . . Not a few of the saints at their death were seen being carried by exultant angels into Paradise…

They also inspire the sick with good sentiments and their ministrations continue even after death. . . .

7 Powerful Bible Verses about Angels Watching Over Us

He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.
(Psalm 91:11-12)

Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared.
(Exodus 23:20)

See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.
(Matthew 18:10)

Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?
(Hebrews 1:14)

The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, O you His angels, you mighty ones who do His word, obeying the voice of His word!

Bless the LORD, all His hosts, His ministers, who do His will!
Bless the LORD, all His works, in all places of His dominion.
Bless the LORD, O my soul!
(Psalm 103:19-22)

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.
(Hebrews 13:2)

Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"
(Revelation 5:11-12)

The Angel of the Lord vs The Angel of His Presence

mal 'ak yhwh vs *Mal'ak Panayw* or *Mal'akh Panav*, מַלְאַךְ פָּנָיו

Since the term “angel” can refer to various different kinds of beings, it can be difficult to discern which one is being referred to when the noun is used in Scripture - Exhibit A - “the angel of the Lord”. The meaning of the term can vary according to the context of the biblical passage. Usually, however, “the angel of the Lord” is one sent by YHWH or a messenger of YHWH.

In general, “the angel of the Lord” speaks for God, identifies with God and carries out the responsibilities of God. (See Genesis 16:7-12; 21:17-18; 22:11-18; Exodus 3:2; 14:19; Numbers 22:22-23; Judges 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:11-24; 13:3-22; 2 Samuel 24:16; Zechariah 1:12; 3:1; 12:8; Matthew 28:2; Acts 8:26; 27:23).

In several incidences, those who saw the angel of the Lord feared for their lives because they had “seen the Lord.” Therefore, it is clear that in at least some instances, the angel of the Lord is a theophany - an appearance of God in physical form.

The appearances of the angel of the Lord cease after the incarnation of Christ. Angels are mentioned numerous times in the New Testament, but “the angel of the Lord” is never mentioned in the New Testament after the birth of Christ. There is some confusion regarding Matthew 28:2, where the KJV says “the angel of the Lord” descended from heaven and rolled the stone away from Jesus’ tomb. It is important to note that the original Greek has no article in front of angel; it could be “the angel” or “an angel”. Other translations besides the KJV say it was “an angel,” which is the better wording.

It is possible that appearances of the angel of the Lord were manifestations of Jesus before His incarnation. Jesus declared Himself to be existent “before Abraham” (John 8:58), so it is logical that He would be active and manifest in the world. Whatever the case, whether the angel of the Lord was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ (Christophany) or an appearance of God the Father (theophany), it is highly likely that the phrase “the angel of the Lord” usually identifies a physical appearance of God.
(GotQuestions.org)

The *ESV Study Bible* notes this:

Where the angel of the LORD appears in the OT, he is often described as acting or speaking in a manner that suggests he is more than simply an angel or messenger and that he is closely identified with God Himself (e.g., Genesis 22:11-18). Here he appears to Moses in a flame of fire, which is a sign of God's presence throughout the events narrated in the book of Exodus: in the pillar of fire and cloud that leads and protects the Israelites (Exodus 13:21-22); in the signs of God's presence on Mount Sinai (19:18); and in the tabernacle (40:38). The angel also protects Israel when they come out of Egypt (14:9), and God promises that He will go before Israel in to the land of Canaan (23:20; 33:2). In 3:4 this angel of God is identified as "the LORD" and "God."

In Genesis 18-19, we find the story of the three men at the oaks of Mamre……

The Lord appeared to Abraham…three men stood in front of him.
(Genesis 18:1-3)

So, the three men in this passage are referred to as "the Lord" - a probable reference to "God in Three Persons" - the "Trinity" (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). Another possibility is that two of them were angels and the third, a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ.

To make it even more befuddling, the Bible teaches that "no one has seen God in bodily form" (Deuteronomy 4:12-19; John 1:18), but that Jesus has made Him known (visibly and in other ways?). This Old Testament declaration may have been God's way of teaching Israel that the images and idols of pagan religions cannot be true representations of the *invisible* God (see Exodus 20:4-5a for more evidence for this theory). When Jesus appeared, (whether as a pre-incarnate "angel of the Lord" or as the incarnate "Messiah"), it was to show us an accurate representation of God.

In reference to the Genesis 18 passage, Dr. Stephen Noll observes: *It would seem that Abraham saw three angels who jointly manifested the divine presence. There seems to be a distribution of the divine attributes of justice and mercy among the three angels.*

References to the "angel of the Lord" can be seen throughout the Old Testament - talking to Hagar (Genesis 16; 21), Abraham (Genesis 22), Jacob (Genesis 32), Moses and the people of Israel (Exodus 3; 14; 23; 32), Balaam (Numbers 22), Joshua (Judges 2), Deborah (Judges 5), Gideon (Judges 6), Manoah and wife (Judges 13), David (1 Chronicles 21), Elijah (1 Kings 19; 2 Kings 1), Hezekiah (2 Kings 19), Haggai and Zechariah (Haggai 1; Zechariah 1-6), and Daniel (Daniel 3).

The angel of the Lord guides, guards and sometimes rebukes on God's

behalf. But when Mt. Sinai becomes the locus of God's presence, the angel of the Lord no longer appears in epiphanies but accompanies the divine presence and name…

(Noll)

But is there a difference between the "angel of the Lord" and the "angel of His presence"?

In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them. In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old.

(Isaiah 63:9)

Dr. Noll sees the "Angel of the Presence" (Isaiah 63:7-10) as being an inner circle of several archangels, one of whom serves as a vehicle for the personal name, presence and mercy of the invisible Lord.

Other scholars see it this way……

The "angel of the Lord" is an expression often used in the Old Testament to denote a special manifestation of God Himself; it does not denote a messenger coming from God; it frequently signifies a coming of God into human affairs.

The still stronger phrase, "the angel of His presence" certainly denotes any form under which God chooses to make His immediate presence felt by His children. The form chosen may, or may not, be that of an angelic being or a human instrument, but it is always a means whereby God Himself comes right into human experience to help and heal and save.

(Bible Hub)

In Isaiah and Ezekiel's visions, priestly "angels of the Presence" minister in the heavenly sanctuary and become heavenly tour guides to human seers. With angels thus cloistered above, prophets acquire the role of God's messengers.

(Noll)

Named Angels

Dr. Noll observes that there are only two named angels in the *Tanakh* (*Hebrew* Bible)……

1. **Gabriel** (meaning, "man of God") is an angelic "revealer of mysteries" (Daniel 10-12). He is seen interpreting Daniel's visions in Daniel 8:16-26; 9:20-27 and announcing the births of John and Jesus in Luke 1:11-20 and Luke 1:26-28.

2. **Michael** (meaning, "who is like God") is an archangel, a warrior in the angelic realm, one of the chief princes, and the protector of both Israel and the Church (Jude 9; Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; Revelation 12:7).

Other than Michael, the only other mention of an *archangel* in the Bible is the unnamed archangel in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 who shouts at the appearing of the Second Coming of Christ.

Michael is spoken of four times in Scripture……

1. In Daniel 10, Michael comes to comfort Daniel after he has had a vision, and promises to be his helper in all things.

2. In Daniel 12, Michael is called "the great prince who stands for the children of Thy people". In these references, Michael is represented as Israel's great support during the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity.

3. In the letter of Jude (verse 9) we are told that Michael disputed with Satan over the body of Moses.

4. In Revelation 12, John recounts his vision of the great battle in heaven, when the wicked angels under Lucifer (Satan) revolt against God, and how Michael, leading the faithful angels, defeats the hosts of evil and drives them out. Because of the victory, Michael is revered in many traditions as the protector of the Church, as once he was regarded as the protector of the Israelites. In the Eastern Church, Michael is placed over all the angels, as prince of the Seraphim.

(Doctoral Notes by Dr. Stephen Noll)

At the end of the 19th century, Pope Leo XIII decreed that after all daily low masses a prayer to Michael should be recited to protect the Church from the sins of Modernism. This requirement was made optional in the 1960s after Vatican II.

(www.Catholic-pages.com)

It is said that one day having celebrated the Holy Sacrifice, the aged Pontiff Leo XIII was in a conference of Cardinals. Suddenly, he sank to the floor in a deep swoon. Physicians who hastened to his side feared that he had already expired, for they could find no trace of his pulse.

However, after a short interval the Holy Father rallied, and opening his eyes exclaimed with great emotion: "Oh what a horrible picture I was permitted to see!"

He had been shown in the spirit the tremendous activities of the evil spirits and their ravings against the Church. But in the midst of this vision of horror he had also beheld consoling visions of the glorious Archangel Michael, who had appeared and cast Satan and his legions back into the abyss of Hell.

(Our Lady of Sorrows website)

Soon afterward the Pope composed this well-known prayer……

Saint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in the hour of battle.
Keep us safe from the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God restrain (rebuke) him, we humbly pray,
and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host,
by the power of God, cast Satan down into Hell,
and with him all the evil spirits who wander
through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

In 1994, Pope John Paul II asked everyone to recite the prayer "in spiritual battle against forces of darkness and against the spirit of this world." It is not obligatory, however.

Most Protestants do not pray to angels, citing……

1. the potential for deception by fallen angels (1 Timothy 2:5; 2 Corinthians 11:14);

2. an absence of examples of humans praying to anyone but God in the Bible - indeed, there is no suggestion in Scripture to do so;

3. concern that such prayers could morph into a form of worship;

4. the question: Why would you pray to an angel (or anyone else for that matter) when as believers, we have direct access to the Father?

Through Him (Christ) we have access to the Father by one Spirit.
(Ephesians 2:18)

There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.
(1 Timothy 2:5; see also Hebrews 8:6; 9:15, 24; 1 John 2:1)

5. God's Word has instructed us to go boldly before the throne of grace.

Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.
(Hebrews 4:16)

Raphael (meaning "the healing of God" or "the curer of human infirmities") appears as an angel in disguise in the apocryphal book of *Tobit* (3:16; 12:15). He refers to himself as: "one of the seven angels who stand in the glorious presence of the Lord, ready to serve Him."

The fallen angel, **Satan**, (meaning, adversary), is identified by this name almost 50 times in the Bible. Key appearances in the Old Testament include Genesis 3, 1 Chronicles 21:1, Job 1&2, and Zechariah 3:1-2.

Satan is also known as the devil (meaning false accuser or slanderer), as well as Beelzebul (Matthew 12:24), tempter (1 Thessalonians 3:5), wicked one (Matthew 13:19, 38), accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10), the ruler of this world (John 12:31), the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4), prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), Lucifer or morning star (Isaiah 14:12), a wolf (John 10:12), a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8), the great dragon or serpent of old (Revelation 12:9; Genesis 3:1), and other sundry appellations.

The earliest list of *archangels* comes from the book of 1 Enoch and includes Michael (who is the only one called an archangel in the Bible - in Jude 9), Raphael, Gabriel and a fallen angel named **Sariel** (meaning, "princely angel"). In the Book of Enoch, Sariel is described as a leader angel and among those who lusted after the "daughters of men".

1 Enoch also mentions the names of other *fallen angels* and tells the story of how they had carnal relations with humankind, producing a race of giants.

Power Angels: Seraphim

Seraphim ("the burning ones") are thought to be the highest order of angels. They are first spoken of in Isaiah as six-winged angels.

Seraphim is the plural form of śārāp*, a Hebrew word also translated "snake" (Numbers 21:6, 8; Isaiah 14:29).*
(Angels by Dr. Michael Heiser)
In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above Him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory!'

At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."
(Isaiah 6:1-7)

In Isaiah 14:29 and 30:6, the same word is used to refer to serpents - further evidence that Satan may have been a seraph in addition to being a "guardian cherub" (Ezekiel 28:14). If as with men, angel designations are descriptive of "offices" in addition to "metaphysical differences", then perhaps they can hold more than one office.

Since seraphs have a similar description to the "four living creatures" in Revelation 4:8, (having six wings), it is possible that they are one and the same.

Power Angels: Cherubim

Cherubim ((kerub̲îm - guardians of the presence of God) are spoken of 73 times in Scripture - all but one in the Old Testament.

They are said to have wings, though the number varies (Exodus 25:20; 37:9; Isaiah 6:2). Cherubim are at times assigned four faces and both human and bovine body parts (Ezekiel 1; 10). These descriptions are reflected in iconography from the biblical period. The cherubim are placed at the boundary between the sacred and the profane, to protect the holy from contamination.
(Angels by Dr. Michael Heiser)

Let's look at some of the references……

• God sits enthroned between the cherubim (Isaiah 37:16; Exodus 25:18-22; Numbers 7:89; 1 Samuel 4:4; Psalm 80:1).

• Cherubim are associated with the wind of God's Spirit (Psalm 18:10).

• Cherubim stand midway between heaven and earth (1 Chronicles 21:16).

• Their gleaming radiance is similar to God's.

• In appearance, they stand somewhere between the hybrid seraphim of Isaiah and the humanlike archangels of Daniel.

• Their four faces represent the lords of the animal world - lion, eagle, ox and human (Ezekiel 1:10; 10:14; Revelation 4:7-8).

• Satan was a “cherub who covers” - perhaps a reference to being one of the two cherubs who covered the Ark of the Covenant (Ezekiel 28:14; Hebrews 9:5).

• They are utter servants of the divine glory, looking straight ahead and moving wherever the divine Spirit leads.

• The “voice” of their wings is cataclysmic.

• God placed cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth on the east side of the Garden of Eden to bar the way to the Tree of Life for Adam and Eve once they had been exiled from the Garden (Genesis 3:24).

Angels in the New Testament

Here are just a few occasions where angels are seen or spoken of in the New Testament……

• Gabriel appears to Zacharias and to Mary. (It may also have been Gabriel who appeared to Joseph and to the shepherds).

• Prior to His death and resurrection, Jesus encounters angels on only two occasions ……

1. during His wilderness temptation, when a fallen angel, Satan, tempts Him (Luke 4:1-13) and other angels minister to Him (Matthew 4:11; Mark 1:13);

2. in the Garden of Gethsemane when an angel ministers to Him as He sweats drops of blood just prior to His arrest and crucifixion (Luke 22:43).

• Angels are portrayed as judicial witnesses in the divine court (Luke 12:8-9).

• They appear at the resurrection (Matthew 28:2-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-7; John 20:10-13).

• They appear at Christ's ascension (Acts 1:11) and accompany Him at His return (Matthew 16:27; 25:31, 41).

• Some of them will be “servant reapers” of the earth on judgment day, separating the evil from the righteous (Matthew 13:39, 49; 24:31, 36).

• Ephesians refers to the devil, rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world, and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 3:10; 6:11-18).

• Colossians refers to thrones, dominions, principalities and authorities (Colossians 1:16-17; 2:15).

• Hebrews says: “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?” (Hebrews 1:14)

• 1 Peter speaks of “spirits in prison”, angels, authorities and powers (1 Peter 3:18-22).

• Psalm 34:7 says: “The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them”.

• Angels serve as the Spirit's agent to *transmit* revelation rather than as the *source* of revelation. “The difference between the working of angels and the working of the Spirit is a matter of outer and inner - of distinguishing the Author of prophecy from the mouthpiece of prophecy.” (*Noll*)

• In the Book of Revelation, angels serve as a mouthpiece for Christ and His Spirit - apocalyptic tour guides, as it were.

• When John falls down to worship the angelic messenger, he is rebuked for having confused the message with the messenger (Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9). Noll writes, “Worship is a litmus test distinguishing God and His angels.”

• “Angels are at this very moment celebrating the risen Son's once-for-all sacrifice in heaven and administering His judgments on earth.” (*Noll*)

Other Interesting Details

In their number the angels are thought by far to exceed in multitude all the men who have ever been or who are yet to be. (The numbers found in Daniel and Revelation) merely signify that their number is beyond computation.

Their glory is to execute God's orders promptly and joyously and they lose no opportunity of proving their fidelity and devotion to the most gracious and the most perfect of Masters. They are an example to men of loving service and obedience.

They do not abandon even those wretched persons who live in mortal sin, who trample underfoot the precious blood of the God-Man and are guilty of His death! With incredible kindness they continue to watch over these unfortunate souls and spare no effort in bringing them to penance and reconciliation with God.
(*St Michael & the Angels* by Anonymous)

- Like the moon, angels do not generate their own light.
- "Though distinct from God, the archangels bask in reflected glory, even when they appear on earth. Frequently, the same terms are used to describe God's glory and that of His representative. Compare Ezekiel 1:26-28 with 8:2 and Daniel 7:9-10 with 10:5-6." (*Noll*)

Note: Even humans can reflect God's glory, as did Moses when he descended from Mt Sinai, face aglow from having been in the presence of God (Exodus 34:29-30, 33-35; 2 Corinthians 3:7-18).

"The transference of characteristics from God to an archangel occurs in the book of Revelation - frequently, the person who meets a glorious angel ends up facedown, overwhelmed with awe." (Matthew 28:2-4; Revelation 22:8) - (*Noll*)

Attributes that we share with our Creator include: intelligence, creativity, emotions, rationality, and volition. Our fellow imagers, the members of the heavenly host, have them as well, because they are also his imagers. We are thus far less intelligent, creative, and wise than the members of the spiritual world. We simply do not know what they have learned through access to God and lifespans of many eons. But what they are and know is part of our own destiny in Christ.

• Both fallen and good angels carry out God's will on earth - the good, knowingly - the fallen, unknowingly.

• "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them." (Psalm 34:7; 91:11; Acts 12:7; 27:23)

• Angels are always portrayed as personal beings praising God verbally.

• While said to be *like* God, they are never said to be in the *image* or *likeness* of God. They are never called "son of man", nor are humans ever called "sons of God" (Hebrew: בני האלהים, romanized: *bənê ĕlōhîm*, literally: "sons of the gods").

• The "sons of God" who "saw that the daughters of men were fair and took to wife such as they chose" (Genesis 6:2) linguistically must refer to "divine beings" or "angels".

• Their giant offspring are "fallen ones" or Nephilim.

• Such giants were killed in the flood but had returned by the time of King David, when he fought Goliath.

• Reports of UFOs and alien abductions, including the breeding of humans with aliens, could be a return to that ancient form of rebellion and deception.

• In Luke 20:35-36, where Jesus says of people of the age to come: "they will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and can no longer die; for they are like the angels" seems to imply that angels cannot procreate. However, the phrase, "they are like the angels" may simply be referring to the clause immediately preceding it ("can no longer die") rather than the earlier clause ("marry or be given in marriage").

• The ranks of the angels are fixed from eternity. (*Noll*)

• Humans were created "a little lower than the angels" (Psalm 8:5; Hebrews 2:7) yet in the end will be their judges (1 Corinthians 6:3). It may be that this plan was the precipitating cause for the rebellion of one-third of the angels.

• Angels are called "princes" in Daniel, but nowhere are they called "kings" or "anointed ones".

• They have a life of their own that includes praise and service but only appear to human beings by divine assignment.

• Hebrews 1:14 calls them "ministering spirits sent to serve

those who will inherit salvation".

• They sometimes appear in human form so convincingly that we are unaware that we are entertaining them (Hebrews 13:2).

• We have had mysteries revealed to us that even angels have longed to look into (1 Peter 1:12).

• Certain angels and humans are referred to as "holy ones" in the Scriptures (Deuteronomy 33:3; Zechariah 14:5; Romans 16:15; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Ephesians 3:8; Philippians 1:1).

• Angels are mobile and can instantly appear and disappear.

• "They are not called spirits in the Old Testament, nor are they said to possess God's Spirit". (*Noll*)

• Angels are infrequently called "Watchers" (ʿîr; plural: ʿîrîn) in the Old Testament. The Aramaic term ʿir occurs three times (Daniel 4:13, 17, 23). I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher [ʿir], a holy one, came down from heaven (v. 13). The sentence is by the decree of the watchers [ʿîrîn], the decision by the word of the holy ones (v. 17). And because the king saw a watcher [ʿir], a holy one, coming down from heaven … (v. 23). In Genesis 6:1–4, "Watchers" is the overwhelming choice of term for the fallen sons of God.

(Angels by Dr. Michael Heiser)

• "The only explicit mention of an angelic spirit in the Old Testament is the 'lying spirit' who volunteers to deceive King Ahab (1 Kings 22:21-24)". (*Noll*) Note: False prophets can be governed by spiritual forces that foment lies through the mouths of those who are opposed to the truth and who speak for their own ends. (See also a reference to "the spirit of falsehood" in 1 John 4:6).

• "Increases or breakouts of angelic activity onto the plane of human observation can be connected with momentous changes or thresholds in salvation history - particularly born from a desire in God for newly empowered witness of Christ to go forth throughout the earth." (*Noll*)

More on Satan & the Dark Side

Many speculate that just as the good angels are divided into a hierarchy, so too are the fallen angels, with Satan as the top dog.

The habitation of the fallen angels is hell and the air that surrounds us; but let them be in hell or in the air, their pain is always the same, for they everywhere carry hell about with them…

Lucifer is the name under which the leader of the rebel angels is frequently referred to. ***Helel*** *is the Hebrew word, derived from* ***Halal****, meaning, to shine. It applied to him before his fall, since by many he is believed to have been the very highest and so most splendorous of all the angels.*

We must remember that they are essentially spirits, as swift as thought, penetrating everywhere and pursuing us everywhere; nothing remains closed to them. They are ever in contact with us. We must resist them strong in the faith and in the power of the Precious Blood, shed to obtain victory over this deadly foe.
(*St Michael & the Angels* by Anonymous)

In the Dead Sea scrolls, Michael is seen as the "Prince of Light" as opposed to Belial (Satan), who is the origin of evil. In Ezekiel 28:15-17b, God says to Satan:

You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you… You were filled with violence and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth……

Jesus told His disciples about the moment when He saw it happen: "I saw Satan fall like lightening from heaven" (Luke 10:18). He is also described as being "cast down" in Revelation 12:9.

A second description of Satan that refers to his pride, presumption and fall from heaven can be found in Isaiah 14:12-14.

According to Jesus (John 8:44), the devil is a murderer, a liar and the father of lies. In the account of the Fall in Genesis 3:1,4-5, we see Satan lying to Adam and Eve, which brought about the fall of man. Satan had already fallen at that

point, but received a severe judgment for his treachery (Genesis 3:14-15).

Interestingly, as Adam and Eve were cast from the Garden of Eden because of their sin, God placed cherubim at the gate to prevent entrance into the Garden (Genesis 3:24). Note that in Ezekiel 28:14, Satan is referred to by God as a *guardian cherub*. And so, God used *cherubim* (plural) to guard the Garden from any re-entry by the *cherub* Satan or Adam & Eve.

When created by God, Adam and Eve were given authority over the earth, as evidenced by being given the right to rule over and name all the animals (Genesis 1:28; 2:19-20). When they fell into sin upon being tempted by Satan, their authority over the earth was transferred to the devil, who then became the "God of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4) and "the ruler of the powers of the air" (Ephesians 2:1-2).

The Bible says, "the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). This explains why Satan was able to offer Jesus authority over the kingdoms of the world (Luke 4:6-7).

When Jesus died on the cross, however, He defeated Satan and took back that authority (Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28). The Bible says that Jesus "having disarmed the powers and authorities, made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Colossians 2:15).

When someone surrenders his/her life to Jesus Christ, the original authority given to Adam and Eve is reinstated by Jesus (Luke 10:19; Daniel 7:6-27) and can be wielded by faith (Mark 11:22-26). The only satanic authority that remains is over unbelievers, as well as over Christians who have been deceived into not believing what Jesus said and did in this regard.

Satan masquerades as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). He blinds the minds of men so that they cannot see the truth (2 Corinthians 4:4). He performs counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10). He maintains power and authority over men (Luke 4:6; Acts 26:18) until they surrender their lives to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Acts 26:18; Luke 10:18-20; Romans 8:1-4).

Other interesting facts about evil beings……

- "Satan", "devil", "Beelzebub" are titles. "Lucifer" may refer to a pre-fall name (Isaiah 14:12).
- Satan is never portrayed as having a body - only described in terms of the creatures or guises he inhabits.
- He is never referred to as "king" - thus, (per Noll), "the New

Testament acknowledges his power while utterly rejecting his authority."

• When society fails to acknowledge God, it comes under the influence of "the prince of the power of the air - the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2).

• Evil has a secondary and independent cause from good, originally found in the willful sin of Satan, which was grounded in pride (Ezekiel 28:17).

• Responsibility for the existence of sin lies at the feet of Satan, his minions and human beings.

• When he fell, one-third of the angels joined him in his rebellion (Revelation 12:4).

• Originally angels were given a free will, to choose good or evil, but once they made their choice, they were fixed in it.

All the angels, teaches the Catechism of Perseverance, were created in the state of innocence and justice, but they were no more impeccable than man. Being free, they had, like men, to undergo a trial. The "Beatific Vision" and immutability in good were the recompense, which they should gain by the proper use, with the assistance of grace, of their free will. God, therefore, subjected them to a trial. Every trial, to be meritorious, must be essentially costly or painful. What was the trial of the angels? It is generally held that the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word - of God made man - was proposed to them for their adoration.
(*St Michael & the Angels* by Anonymous)

So, when sin was found in Satan, it may be that he was rebelling at the announcement in heaven that Jesus was going to perfect man to the point that they would be appointed as judges, above the angels (1 Corinthians 6:3).

It should be noted, however, that evil operates by divine permission within strict limits, such as the limits that God placed on Satan during his attacks on Job (Job 1:10-11) as well as the attack that he was trying to launch against Simon Peter (Luke 22:31-32).

Satan can exert influence over man when he chooses sin over righteousness. The degree of the ground gained by the evil one in the battle is probably based on things like…

- the knowledge of God and His righteousness that the individual has at the moment of temptation (Romans 2:12-29),

- whether the temptation is embraced and/or pursued,

- the resistance to the temptation that is employed (2 Timothy

2:22; James 4:7),

- the pursuit of God by faith for holiness and divine power to overcome (James 4:8-10; Ephesians 4:22-24; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 1:13-16; Leviticus 11:44-45),

- the degree of our brokenness,

- the light that we have been given (Matthew 12:47-48).

Recognizing the sins that easily beset us (Hebrews 12:1), we must prepare ourselves in advance, rather than being captured by surprise at a moment of weakness. The Bible is clear that Satan is like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8-9), and that he waits for the most opportune moment before launching an attack, as he did with Jesus (Luke 4:13).
(Angels: What the Bible Really Says About God's Heavenly Host by Dr. Michael Heiser)

What then should we consider when preparing for and responding to his threats?

• We must pray for protection and avoid intentional sin. "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear God, and He delivers them" (Psalm 34:7). As well, "the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9).

In Zechariah 1:10 we learn that God sends angels "to patrol the earth." Those angels report to the angel of the LORD, "We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest" (Zechariah 1:11). In Psalm 82 the council ʾelōhîm under God's indictment are being judged because of their failure to administrate the nations according to the principles of Yahweh's justice (Psalm 82:2–4). The result is chaos on earth ("all the foundations of the earth are shaken"; Psalm 82:5).
(Angels: What the Bible Really Says About God's Heavenly Host by Dr. Michael Heiser)

• Evil sometimes comes from external ills or inner impulses.

• Satan gives special attention to those in ministry, throwing up every barrier and temptation that he can think of in order to besmirch the minister and/or destroy any fruit thereof.

• Satan masquerades as an angel of light - fitting for one called "Lucifer", or "morning star" (2 Corinthians 11:14).

• His servants masquerade as servants of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:15).

• They preach "another Jesus" than the one preached by the

Apostles (2 Corinthians 11:4).

• They preach "another gospel" - a gospel of "salvation by works" (Galatians 1:8; 3:1-3) and a gospel of lawlessness (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 7).

• Satan is referred to in the New Testament as "that ancient serpent" (Revelation 12:9), the perpetual accuser, the murderer of saints, "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44), an angel of light and prince of the demonic kingdom (Mark 3:22).

• "The New Testament identifies a number of spiritual evils as being inspired by Satan: mental and physical illness, hypocrisy, syncretism and heresy." (*Noll*)

• Satan is the first creature to be cursed by God.

• He fell like lightening from heaven (Luke 10:18).

• Satan, the antichrist (the beast), and the spirit of false religion constitute an unholy trinity. They do not create anything new but instead copy the things of God as a means of deception.

• The "antichrist" is first a "spirit" (1 John 4:3) that is already at work in the world. But it will manifest at the last day as a "man of lawlessness" and a "son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12). It may be that he will actually be an incarnation of Satan himself (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7).

• As in heaven, there is an interlocking of the political and cosmic orders, with unholy angelic forces overseeing each region of the earth (Ephesians 6:12).

A fascinating reference to the location of Satan's throne in the Scriptures is found in Revelation 2:12-13…

To the angel of the church in Pergamum write…"I know your works and where you live, where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to My name. You did not renounce your faith in Me, even in the days of Antipas, My faithful witness, who was put to death in your city, where Satan lives."

Interestingly enough, there actually was an "Altar of Pergamon" in Asia Minor that was the center of Emperor worship. It was originally called the altar of "Zeus", who many scholars understand to be Satan. It includes a relief that depicts the ancient "Battle of the Giants", when the Olympian gods fought the giants of old.

During the time of the Roman Empire, early believers who refused to

acknowledge the Emperor as God were ritually murdered on its altar.

Since 1930, the "Altar of Pergamon" has rested in a museum in Berlin. Housing the altar in Germany undoubtedly had a spiritual impact during Hitler's Third Reich (meaning "empire").

Note: Reich #1 (initially under Charlemagne) was the Holy Roman Empire (800-1806 A.D.). Reich #2 (initially under Bismark) was the German Empire (1871-1918 A.D.).

In 1934, Hitler commissioned a reproduction of the altar for his rallies in Nuremberg, where he made his decree of death to the Jews and other non-Aryan peoples. Fifty-five million people died during World War II as a result, including 6 million Jews.

Another historic tie to fallen angels can be found in the story of Babylon (in modern-day Iraq). Six hundred years before Christ, Jewish exiles lived in Babylon, which was known as "a haunt for demons, sorceries, and spells" - the very place chosen by the devil (Lucifer) to establish his world government (Genesis 11:1-7; Isaiah 14:12-24; 47; Jeremiah 51:9; Revelation 18).

In Babylon was the ziggurat, the rebuilt tower of Babel - symbol of defiance against God; and the temple of Marduk (Baal by his other name), the dragon-god, an evil spirit worshipped by self-torture and human sacrifice - surely the devil himself! The grand processional entrance to all this was through the Ishtar Gate. Covered with a swarm of monsters, including 337 snake-dragons (337 in Hebrew numerology means 'Sheol' or hell), this was surely the gateway to hell on earth!

(*Prophetic Vision* magazine - Autumn 1999)

Note: A reproduction of the now-destroyed 48-foot-tall arch (built in the 3rd century A.D.) that stood in front of the "Temple of Baal" (or "Bel") in Palmyra, Syria, has more recently been erected in multiple cities around the world (cf. Jeremiah 19:4-6). Author Jonathan Cahn had this to say: "Baal was the god to whom they sacrificed their children, before whom they practiced sexual immorality and called good 'evil' and evil 'good.' Baal was the god in whose name Israel persecuted the prophets and the righteous of their day."

Demons

Ultimately, the origin of demons is unknown. Some speculate that they are the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim - giants born from the mating of fallen angels with humans - who died in the flood and elsewhere (Genesis 6:1-4; Numbers 13:32-33).

Some believe that demons spring from the dead spirits of the Rephaim, who are also referenced in the Bible as being giants (Genesis 14:5). It may be that Nephilim, Rephaim, Zuzim, Emim and Anakim are local Canaanite names for the same race of giants (Deuteronomy 2:20-21; 3:11).

The gods to whom the pagans and rebellious Hebrews sacrificed were called demons in the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:17). See also Psalm 106:37 and 1 Corinthians 10:20.

Others believe that the word “demon” simply refers to fallen angels. However, in this study, we will assume that they are the spirits of giants who have died.

Let's take a look at how demons are said to operate.

The Bible shows them as causing spiritual and physical blindness, deafness, paralysis, epilepsy, and madness in certain people. They often operate internally at subconscious levels through the thoughts, beliefs and desires of man.

They can “demonize”, “afflict”, or “oppress” a Christian and can afflict a non-believer so completely that the Bible sometimes refers to it as “demon possession” (see v 15 of the story of the demoniac in Mark 5:1-20, where the Greek word used for demon-possession is δαιμονιζόμενον).

“Demonization” of a believer involves a degree of influence or control more than it does spatial inhabitation, whereas the “demon possession” of a nonbeliever appears to be the point at which a demonic power exerts total control over the person's will. At this stage, the demon can increase the person's physical strength to superhuman levels and cause them to do things he or she does not want to do.

Demons can inhabit physical objects, such as images used in false religions, ritual items and other sundry tools of the occult.

Demons appear to gain ground ("a stronghold") in a human in direct proportion to the willfulness and knowledge associated with that human's sin against God and the degree of perversity associated with the sin - child abuse/ sacrifice, depraved sexual sins, etc.

Demons also appear to be able to perpetuate their influence in the offspring of demonized parents by exerting strong compulsions in those children to commit the same sins that their fathers committed (Exodus 20:5; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 7:9).

However, the Bible teaches that any son or daughter who rejects the sins of their parents will be set free from the tyranny of that bondage by the Lord (Leviticus 26:39-40; Ezekiel 18:14, 17-20).

It may be that some demons are better at their job than others - just like humans. If so, the generalities stated above can sometimes be affected by chance. In other words, in any given instance, a highly skilled demon may not be present to take full advantage of the opening given them when someone commits a particular sin. This might explain why some people who commit the most egregious sins seem to suffer little consequence while others seem to suffer a disproportionately negative outcome.

Demons appear to specialize in certain sin realms and thereby are quick to learn how to manipulate and successfully tempt their victims. This is why returning to old "haunts" is especially dangerous for person.

Jesus Christ has overthrown the unchallenged reign of demonic powers and given man a tool to be freed from their control. Henceforth, demons must submit to a believer who speaks by faith in the "name" (authority) of Jesus (Luke 10:17).

Remember, a "believer" is a "follower of Christ" - not just in name, but also in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). Even demons are aware of the transfer of power that has been conferred upon such believers by Jesus Christ (Luke 10:19; James 2:19), and must obey. Alternately, they can recognize those who try to cast them out who do not know Jesus (Acts 19:13-16).

Although Jesus asked the demons that infested the demoniac what their name was (Mark 5:9), it is best not to have dialogue with demons because of their skill at deception. Since Satan is "the father of lies" (John 8:44), then any information that we might get from a demon is likely to be deceptive.

It is best to name the demon according to what it is tempting the person to do. For example, if the temptation is lust, renounce and cast out the spirit of lust. If it is pride, renounce and cast out the spirit of pride. Then ask the Holy Spirit

to lead you in a process of discovering and renouncing the ground that allowed the problem to exist in the first place.

A faithful and spiritually strong believer who is being led by the Holy Spirit can order a demonic spirit to leave in Jesus' name provided the demonized one agrees and is intent on removing the “ground” (legal reason) that allowed the demon to afflict him or her in the first place (Ephesians 4:25-32). Revelation by the Holy Spirit is key here.

Inexplicably, victims of abuse can be afflicted by a demonic power. In such cases, the “ground” allowed the demon might include unforgiveness, hatred, or some other “sin of response” to the abuse.

It could also be a “sin of the father” that has been passed down to the person that has not yet been renounced and cancelled through a concerted effort by the victim to sever such a “soul tie” in the name of Jesus (Ezekiel 18:14-20). Deliverance ministry by seasoned believers can be very important in such cases.

Although self-deliverance is possible for a Spirit-led believer who has gained faith and determination, don't go it alone if at all possible.

In the last days, demons will go out into all the earth to perform miraculous signs that deceive the kings of the earth (Revelation 16:14). It would seem that they are doing so even now.

Principalities & Powers

According to Paul, "principalities and powers" stands for a worldwide web of human affairs grounded in a spiritual hierarchy, a single "dominion of darkness" that includes both spiritual and human rulers, and a "shadow government" that is ultimately under God's dominion.

If "principalities" constitute an order that includes spiritual and human rulers, Paul's "world rulers" (Ephesians 6:12) must be either demons or angels. Since principalities are associated with evil in the heavenly places and biblical demons are exclusively involved in the earth, they must be fallen angels.

In our age, (the period between His resurrection and ours), Christ is in the process of subjecting the principalities. Then, at His second coming, He will hand over the restored kingdom to the Father. The mission of the Church is part of the subjection of the powers and rulers who are passing away (1 Corinthians 2:6), but Christ alone will bring this process to a decisive fulfillment.
(*Noll*)

In the *Book of Enoch* (a popular book in the early Church), there is a primordial war in heaven between good and evil angels - "stars who do not keep their appointed courses" (Jude 6). The fallen angels have sworn an oath to consolidate their power in a new world order of sin. They have lusted for the daughters of men, intermarried and taught their new wives wisdom that goes beyond the limits of creaturely knowledge - secrets of technology, magic and divination. Seventy angelic shepherds have lost their rule over lands and become single world rulers over successive periods of history, partitioned into four evil empires. Their ultimate fate is hell.

The Book of Daniel contains a similar theme, but with four beasts (lion, bear, panther and a final monster) that represent the various empires. However, the King of Kings - the Son of Man - who has dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him, finally saves the day (Daniel 7:14).

When Jesus came casting out demons, He declared that the defining moment of history had come, saying: "If I by the finger of God cast out Satan, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you" (Luke 11:20). In essence, He signaled that the true loyalty of angels and men would be provoked by their response to Him - the One who casts out Satan.

Jesus silenced the wind and the waves, walking over them as if He owned them, declaring: "Now shall the ruler of this world be cast out . . .. He has no power over Me . . .. because the ruler of this world is judged."
(John 12, 14, 16)

Dr. Stephen Noll writes……

Like a priest cleansing a house room by room, He is purifying the whole world for the Kingdom of God - delivering it from the hand of its spiritual enemies. Satan's demonic stranglehold is broken, but his will to power remains. Now the people and its leaders must choose whether to serve the Son in His mission to the end. If they refuse, only the specter of greater oppression awaits them.

Elisha was one of the greatest prophets in the history of Israel. On one occasion, the king of Aram surrounded the city with horses, chariots and a very strong force in order to capture Elisha and his servant. This frightened the servant, so he asked Elisha what they should do. Elisha answered…

"*Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."*

And Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes so he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, "Strike these people with blindness." So He struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked.
(2 Kings 14-18)

There is a great battle going on in the heavenlies between the forces of good and evil. A mirror battle is also happening on earth between believers and the demonic realm. The heavenly host has their angelic battles (Daniel 10:13; Revelation 12:7-9) and we ours (2 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 4:27; 6:10-18; 2 Kings 6:17; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9). In collaboration with human beings and His angels on earth, God is in the process of enforcing the victory of the Kingdom, won by Christ.

It is going to be a fight to the finish and we best be on the right side when it's over. God is going to destroy all the work of the evil one and banish all who side with the devil to the lake of fire (1 John 3:8).

Our *only* hope is a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, who is the Commander in Chief of the armies of God (ref. Joshua 5:13-15; Matthew 26:52-53). If we wish it, He will send the Holy Spirit to us with power (Acts 1:8) so that we can fight and be witnesses in all the heavens and earth that

Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the Messiah (Yeshu'a Hamashiach), the Savior (Moshia') and the Name (Hashem) above all names (Philippians 2:9-11).

Fundamentally, the battle is the Lord's (2 Chronicles 20:15c-17; Zechariah 4:6; 1 Samuel 17:47; Exodus 14:13-14; Deuteronomy 20:4). There's no contest really because He possesses all power and authority (Matthew 28:18-20).

Having disarmed the powers and authorities, He has made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.
(Colossians 2:15)

Those who follow Jesus Christ have been given the privilege of participating in this battle with God and His angelic host. And so, He has equipped us with the armor of God and the power of His Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 10:4; Joshua 1:9).

The Bible exhorts believers to "stand firm against the devil's schemes". As listed in Ephesians 6:11-18, the seven weapons of our warfare are:

1. Truth
2. Righteousness
3. Readiness - that comes from the gospel of peace
4. Faith - with which you can extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one.
5. Salvation
6. The Word of God
7. Prayer in the Spirit

Some years ago, I was invited to speak on the subject of how the Lord set me free from the tyranny of sexual bondage and brokenness. Unwittingly, however, the pastor put me up in a hotel that was surrounded by porn stores and strip clubs.

As I entered the room, I noticed that there were pornographic magazines stacked next to the bed. The maid had obviously thought that the previous occupant would be staying an additional night.

As I picked up the magazines, I noticed that some of them had been favorites of mine when I was in the grip of sexual addiction and thought to myself: "I haven't used pornography for fifteen years. It must be far worse than it was then. Perhaps I should take a peek so that I will better know what it is that I am preaching against."

As I began to open one of the magazines, a voice that reverberated to the ends of the universe thundered: “Satan is trying to take you out!”

After getting over the shock of it, I thought to myself: “Of course! What a fool I am!”

Now, angry with the tempter, I grabbed the magazines, threw them forcefully into the garbage can, and stomped them to the bottom with my foot. Instantly, the same voice bellowed……

I will crush him under My feet!

The biblical reference was to Romans 16:20. Other verses that echo the same promise are Psalm 108:13 and 2 Chronicles 32:7-8c, which read…

With God, we will gain the victory, and He will trample down our enemies.

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.

It was a reminder that I needed to always remain under the shelter of the Almighty in order to escape the deceptions of the evil one and his angelic powers.

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.

Surely He will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart…

He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.
(Psalm 91:1-4, 11)

It was also a reminder that according to the Scriptures, if we live in intimate communion with Him, God and His angels will fight our battles for us.

To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy - to the only God our Savior, be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore. Amen!
(Jude 24-25; see also Psalm 37:23-24; 55:22; 1 Peter 1:5)

It was an unforgettable moment, when I directly experienced Jesus' desire to

keep me from falling. He had overlooked my impending fall into sin and had rescued me because I lived in intimate communion with Him and believed in His promise to overcome all the power of the enemy, for my sake as well as for all those who believe in and follow Him.

In the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 6:9-13 - the "Lord's Prayer" - there are several petitions that directly apply to the great cosmic battle that we are engaged in.

Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Here, Jesus calls us to ask the Father to send the full perfection of His Kingdom and obedience to His will. It is a petition that can only be made by someone who knows Christ and is genuinely fed up with the world of sin.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the Kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen!

In other words, we are asking for deliverance from the devil because he will soon have no power or kingdom. He is a defeated foe. God alone, and for all time, will reign over the kingdoms of this world and of His Christ (Revelation 11:15b).

In a sense we are asking God to hurry up and rid the earth of all evil, for His name's sake and for our sake. And so, we cry to Jesus "Maranatha!" - meaning, "Come Lord Jesus!" (1 Corinthians 16:22)

When the "lawless one" is revealed, the Lord Jesus will overthrow him with the breath of His mouth and destroy him by the splendor of His coming.
(2 Thessalonians 2:8)

Did you catch that? With just "the breath of His mouth" will Jesus destroy all the power of evil!

The great hymn writer, Isaac Watts once penned…

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
does its successive journeys run,
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Let every creature rise and bring
the highest honors to our King,
angels descend with songs again,
and earth repeat the loud amen.

The Scriptures tell us……

A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found.
(Psalm 37:10)

You see, Jesus Christ came to earth to redeem us from eternal judgment and to destroy all the work of the evil one.

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.
(1 John 3:8)

In the world, you will have trouble, but take heart, for I have overcome the world.
(John 16:33)

In the famous passage of Isaiah 14:12-15, many of the great sins of Satan are described, followed in verses 16 and 17 with the surprise of onlookers as they see him revealed for who he truly is after his judgment……

Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: "Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities?"

It may be something like when the great "Wizard of OZ" was exposed as a little old man in the famous movie of that name.

Worshipping Angels

A word of caution is in order regarding what could be tantamount to the worship of angels.

We've seen how the Apostle John twice made the mistake of bowing down before an angel. In both cases, the angel was lightening quick to chide John for doing so and declared, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God!" (Revelation 19:9-10; 22:8-9)

Angels must be so awesome in their aspect that people can make the mistake of falling to their knees at the sight of them. However, the Bible forbids this and commands that we worship God alone. Indeed, Hebrews 1:4 refers to Jesus as "much superior to the angels".

It was Satan who first tried to tempt Jesus to worship him (Matthew 4:9-10; Luke 4:7-8). Jesus' answer was: "Go Satan, for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only!'"

In Romans, the Apostle Paul wrote about those who "exchanged the truth for a lie, worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever, Amen!" (Romans 1:25)

Some people are very suggestible and easily deceived. Some need to gain approval by claiming to see angels as a way of appearing spiritual. Others are not in sync with God and see visions of angels that are not from God, but are the result of their own fleshly mind. Still others hold to gnostic or New Age beliefs and are therefore ripe for deception.

In Colossians 2:18, Paul spoke of those who would…….

…..defraud believers of their prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind……

A footnote in the NASB Study Bible reveals that during Paul's time, some believed in what they called…….

……the absolute God, who was believed to be so far above man that He could only be worshipped in the form of angels He had created. *Second*

century Gnosticism conceived of a list of spirit beings who had emanated from God and through whom God can be approached.

Dr. N.T. Wright sees Paul's reference to the worship of angels as evidence of the mistaken, angel-centric nature of some people's religion:

….the people he is opposing spend so much time in speculations about angels, or in celebrating the fact that the Law was given *by them* (on Mt Sinai)*, that they are in effect worshipping them instead of God……*

In essence, Wright sees the Colossians passage as a warning to those who confuse what is *merely supernatural* with what is *genuinely spiritual*. He writes…..

This is particularly pertinent to Christians living in a rationalistic age, who may be tempted to regard a wide variety of paranormal or supernatural occurrences as somehow spiritual….
(*Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Colossians and Philemon* by N.T. Wright)

Wright sees such "super-spiritual" people as attempting to use illegitimate means to enter into heavenly mysteries. In essence, they are "entering into their own visions" and ending up with imaginary fantasies.

As for the Church Fathers…….

- In his writings, Origen adopts Jeremiah's criticism of Israel for worshipping angels and sacrificing to the "queen of heaven".
- Theodoret of Cyr notes that "those who defend the Law lead persons to worship angels, since they say that the Law was given through said angels." (ref. Acts 7:38, 53; Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2)

[Sidebar: It should be noted that the Law was delivered by God *through the agency of angels* - where they spoke in the first person on God's behalf.]

In Acts 7:42, Stephen refers to the "golden calf " incident at Mt Sinai when God gave up those who worshipped the image "to serve the host of heaven" - undoubtedly the *fallen* hosts of heaven.

In this case, the word used is the common word for "religion" (θρησκεία *thrēskeia*, Acts 26:5, James 1:26,27) not the word "worship" (λατρεία *latreia*, cf. verb form in Acts 7:42), which is used for God or pagan deities. This leaves open the possibility that the word used may have included reference to a wider range of activities, including: the

invocation of angels; excessive interest in angelic hierarchies; conception of angels as mediators, et al.

(Wikipedia)

An Old Testament reference to the worship of angels includes 2 Kings 17:16, which says of the sons of Israel: "

They forsook all the commandments of the Lord their God and made for themselves molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal.

(see also 2 Kings 21:3)

There are many people in the world today for whom this might apply. Myriads of books have been written about angels - most of which teach false doctrine. Such angels are "angels of light".

What about "veneration" of angels - something accepted in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches?

To venerate is to honor someone who has a high degree of holiness - to regard them with reverence and respect. Some non-protestant communions venerate saints by bowing to them, kneeling before their image (statue), or making the sign of the cross. Their intention is to honor the angel or saint, not to worship them as God.

Protestants, however, see such actions as tantamount to a heretical form of worship - idolatry - pointing to the oft-seen processions of statues through the streets and the kneeling before them that is often accompanied by prayer to the one represented in the image.

They see such bowing and praying as evidence that what they are doing is more than just respecting the angel or saint - that they are committing the same error as the Apostle John in Revelation 19:9-10; 22:8-9 - an act for which the angel rebuked him - referring to his actions as misplaced worship. Protestant reformers such as John Calvin and Martin Luther believed such "veneration" was a type of blasphemy.

What Don't We Know About Angels?

There are many things about the heavenly host that we don't know. Although the list is endless, here are some of them……

• We don't know if there are female angels. Although some have claimed to have seen female angels, in the Bible they only appear as male. Even the word “angelos” is a masculine noun.

However, if fallen angels mated with human women to produce a race of giants, it only makes sense that they have female counterparts in heaven. However, it may be that angels exist in a manner in which gender is not the same as we understand it.

It may be that since angels can temporarily take human form, the form they choose to take is almost exclusively male for reasons known to God alone.

• We don't know for sure why the angels were not given a second chance when they sinned. It may be because they did so while seeing the very face of God. The God who is veiled to us is not veiled to them.

However, it is possible that they did receive a second chance not revealed to us before the creation of man.

• We do not know why Satan is given a second chance to deceive the world after being locked up the first time (ref. Revelation 20:1-3, 7-8). It may be that the people born during the millennial reign of Christ must be tested like everyone else as to whether they will follow Christ. We just don't know.

• We also don't know how angels fight other angels. Is it a physical fight or something done on a spiritual plane alone? And if so, how does that work?

• We don't know what angels do in their off time. Do they have parties, special gatherings, vacations? Do they tell each other stories of their exploits? Do they travel for leisure?

• We don't know when they were created. However, since Satan is already a fallen angel when Adam and Eve are created, angels must have been created before man - at least, before the sixth day of creation.

Dr. Wayne Grudem speculates that the angels may have been created on the first day of creation. Just before that first day, Genesis describes the earth as being “formless and empty” (Genesis 1:2). Another clue found in Job 38:6-7 is that when God laid the cornerstone of the earth, “the morning stars sang together, and all the angels shouted for joy”. Ultimately, we simply don't know when the angels were created.

• We don't know how many angels exist, although if everyone has a guardian angel, then the number must be greater than the number of human beings born so far. In all history, that number has been 109 billion. In fact, there are at least 100 million angels encircling the throne of God alone! (Revelation 5:11) What a sight that must be!

• We don't know if angels have wings. Clearly, seraphs have wings (Isaiah 6:2). The four living creatures (cherubim) have wings (Exodus 25:18-20; Ezekiel 1:5-11; 10:14-16). So if our assumption that all the heavenly hosts fall under the term “angel” then at least some angels do indeed have wings.

Angels in the Last Days

The Book of Revelation tells us a great deal about what God's angels will do during the Final Tribulation just before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. They will be exceedingly active during that time.

• In chapter 1, God sends an angel to the Apostle John to reveal to him what will happen during the last days.

• In chapters 2 & 3, John is told to write commendations and warnings to seven angels who oversee seven churches - each church having its own angel.

• In chapter 4, John sees “seven spirits of God” before the throne, as well as four “living creatures” (each covered with eyes and having six wings), which never stop praising the Lord.

• In chapter 5, John again sees the four living creatures and the seven spirits of God, as well as a “mighty angel” who cries out: “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” The Apostle then sees “ten thousand times ten thousand” angels encircling the throne of the Lamb of God (Jesus), praising Him for being worthy to open the scroll.

• In chapter 6, the four living creatures show John the four horses of the Apocalypse.

• In chapter 7, John sees four angels “who had power to harm the land and the sea” standing at the four corners of the earth. A fifth angel “having the seal of the living God” calls out to the other angels not to harm the land and sea until a seal is placed on the foreheads of the servants of God “who have come out of the Great Tribulation”. Then the four living creatures and all the angels fall down and worship God.

• In chapters 8 & 9, John sees “the seven angels who stand before God” being given trumpets. Another angel with a golden censer offers incense on the golden altar before God's throne. From the angel's hand the smoke mingles “with the prayers of the saints that went up before God”. Then the angel fills the censer with fire from the altar and hurls it to the earth, causing “peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightening and an earthquake”.

Next the seven angels, one by one, sound their trumpets, bringing great destruction on the earth.

Then, a fallen angel ("the angel of the Abyss" - named Abaddon - perhaps Satan), is given the key to the shaft of the Abyss and for five months is allowed to torture all the inhabitants of the earth who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. Locusts who look like horses with faces like men also come down upon the earth to carry out the torture.

Next, the angels at the four corners of the earth are released to kill one-third of mankind, using 200 million mounted troops. Still, mankind refuses to repent and continue to worship demons and idols.

• In chapter 10, a mighty angel comes down from heaven with a little scroll in his hand and plants one foot on the sea and the other on the land. He gives a loud shout like the roar of a lion which causes "seven thunders" to speak. He swears to heaven that there will be no more delay in accomplishing the mystery of heaven when the seventh angel blows his trumpet (see 11:15). The angel then hands the little scroll to the Apostle John, who eats it - probably as preparation for an important prophecy (v 11).

• In chapter 11, when the "two witnesses" finish prophesying from the temple in Jerusalem, "the beast" (probably the Antichrist) comes up from the Abyss and kills them. After they have come back to life and ascended to heaven, the seventh angel (reference chapters 8 & 9) sounds his trumpet and loud voices cry out "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever".

• In chapter 12, an enormous dragon (Satan) with seven heads, ten horns and seven crowns on his head sweeps a third of the stars (perhaps the angels who rebelled against God) out of the sky and flings them to the earth. He then tries to kill a child (who is Christ) of a woman (either the Virgin Mary or the Church) who appears in heaven, but the child is snatched up to God and His throne.

War breaks out in heaven. The archangel Michael and his angels fight against the dragon and his angels. The fallen angels lose their place in heaven as a result of their defeat. Satan (the dragon) and his angels are then hurled down to the earth. The devil is furious because he knows his time is short, creating woe for the inhabitants of the earth.

Satan then pursues "the woman" who is protected by God from his reach. Enraged, Satan then wages war against her offspring - the saints.

• In chapter 13, the dragon stands on the shore of the sea, (which often means, the nations and peoples of the earth), while a beast (the Antichrist) then arises from the sea. The dragon gives the beast his power, his throne and great authority. One of the seven heads of the beast seems to suffer a fatal head

wound by a sword, yet is healed, which causes the whole world to follow him. Except for the saints, all the inhabitants of the earth worship the dragon and the beast.

The beast is allowed to conquer the saints, blaspheme God and exercise authority over every tribe, people, language and nation for three and a half years.

Then, a second beast (the false prophet) comes out of the earth. Guided by beast #1, he exercises all the authority of the first beast and makes the peoples of the earth worship the first beast. Beast #2 deceives everyone by performing miraculous signs - even causing fire to come down from heaven. He then forces the people to set up and worship an image of beast #1, (on pain of death), which he causes to speak.

Beast #2 then forces everyone to receive a mark that is necessary for buying and selling things. The mark is the name of the beast or the number of his name - 666.

• In chapter 14, the Lamb of God stands on Mount Zion surrounded by the four living creatures and the elders, as 144,000 saints sing songs of praise.

An angel flies in midair, loudly proclaiming:

Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.

A second angel proclaims:

Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.

A third angel then proclaims:

If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.

Another angel emerges from the temple, calling out in a loud voice:

Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

Another angel comes from the temple in heaven with a sharp sickle. Still another angel calls out to the other angel in a loud voice:

Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe.

The angel then swings his sickle on the earth, gathering the grapes and throwing them into the great winepress of God's wrath.

- In chapter 15, the Apostle John sees seven angels in heaven carrying the last seven plagues, which are designed to bring God's wrath to completion. The seven angels then emerge from heaven dressed in clean, shining linen with golden sashes around their chests. One of the four living creatures then gives them seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God.
- In chapter 16, a loud voice from the temple in heaven shouts: "Go pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth". Each angel successively empties his bowl onto the land, sea, rivers and springs, sun, the throne of the beast, the river Euphrates, and into the air.

The angel in charge of the waters declares:

You are just in these judgments, You who are and who were, the Holy One, because You have so judged; for they have shed the blood of Your saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink as they deserve.

During the judgment delivered by the sixth angel, three evil spirits (spirits of demons performing miraculous signs) emerge from the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, to gather the kings of the earth for the battle at Armageddon.

After the seventh angel pours out his bowl, a loud voice from God's throne declares: "It is done!" as disasters of unparalleled proportion strike the earth.

- In chapter 17, one of the seven angels with the seven bowls says to John:

Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.

Then the angel carries John away in the Spirit into a desert, where he sees a

woman called mystery Babylon (who is drunk with the blood of the saints) sitting upon a scarlet beast.

The angel then says:

Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the Book of Life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.

An interesting note: the description of the beast ("who once was, now is not, and yet will come) is in apposition to the name of God (who was, and is, and is to come) - see Revelation 1:8.

The angel then goes on to interpret for John the symbolic meaning behind the "seven heads, seven kings, beast, ten horns, waters, and the woman.

• In chapter 18, another angel comes down from heaven with great authority and splendor, shouting:

Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.

Another voice from heaven (apparently the voice of God) urges His people to come out of her and declares that her destruction will come in one day!

Then a mighty angel casts a boulder into the sea declaring:

With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again. The music of harpists and musicians, flute players and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again. No workman of any trade will ever be found in you again. The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again. The light of a lamp will never shine in you again. The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again. Your merchants were the world's great men. By your magic spell all the nations were led astray. In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth.

• In chapter 19, the four living creatures (and the twenty-four elders) fall

down and worship God, crying "Amen. Hallelujah!" This is followed by a voice from the throne praising God. Then, a great multitude sing praises to God.

The angel who has been guiding John says to him: "Blessed are those who have been invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb! These are the true words of God." John falls down to worship the angel and is told to worship God alone. The angel refers to himself as John's fellow servant.

Jesus then appears in heaven on a white horse. "His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns." The armies of heaven, dressed in fine linen, follow Him on white horses.

An angel "standing in the sun" exhorts birds to come eat the flesh of the remaining inhabitants of the earth. The beast and the false prophet are captured and thrown alive into the lake of fire. The rest of the armies of the devil are killed by a sword that comes from the mouth of the Lord (v 15), which is the Word of God (ref. 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

• In chapter 20, an angel comes down from heaven with a great chain and the key to the Abyss. He seizes the dragon, (aka the serpent, the devil, Satan), binds him for a thousand years, throws him into the Abyss and locks and seals it over him. (After the thousand years, Satan will be released briefly to deceive the nations and gather them for battle).

John then sees thrones on which are seated those who have been given authority to judge - possibly some of the angelic host, the "divine council" and/or some of the saints.

Satan, the beast, and the false prophet are then thrown into the lake of burning sulfur to be tormented day and night forever and ever. This is followed by the "great white throne judgment" of the lost.

• In chapter 21, a loud voice from the throne declares:

Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

Next, one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues says to John, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." The angel then carries him to a great mountain to see the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven. The angel then measures the city, its

gates and its wall.

• In chapter 22, an angel shows John the "river of the water of life" that flows from the throne of God. The angel says to him:

These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show His servants the things that must soon take place.

John falls down to worship the angel and is once again rebuked for not worshiping God alone. The angel then says:

Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy.

Jesus then confirms that He has indeed sent His angel to give John this testimony for the churches.

A Summary

Although some scholars do not consider the highest heavenly beings to be angels, we have used the term as a generic appellation for all of the created heavenly beings. This is similar to how some denominations designate their hierarchy of priests as canons, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, etc. They are all “priests” even though some have additional and more exalted titles and portfolios.

As with men, our all-sufficient God doesn't need the help of angels. However, He has graciously offered them and us the honor and privilege of participating in His purposes in heaven and on earth.

- God created Angels sometime before the creation of man.
- Led by Satan, one third of them rebelled against God and now live to tempt human beings and destroy God's creation.
- Some of them entered into sexual relations with women and produced a race of giants - the offspring of which are the demons that afflict mankind.
- Reports of UFOs and alien abductions, including the breeding of humans with aliens, could be a return to that ancient form of rebellion and deception - a rebellion that is so consequential that it once so polluted the human gene pool that God had to destroy all mankind (except Noah's family) with a worldwide flood. (Note: in Genesis 6:9, Noah was described as being “perfect in his generations”).
- Angels are higher, stronger and temporarily more exalted than humans. But after the Final Judgment, redeemed man will be raised above them and even judge them, as appropriate.
- At least one “guardian angel” is assigned to every human being.
- They sometimes protect humans from demonic powers and other natural disasters through warnings and supernatural interventions.
- Some angels, like Gabriel, are heralds of God's purposes on the earth.
- As their name implies, angels are God's “messengers”.

• God's faithful angels, under His direction, make sure that His purposes are carried out on the earth.

• At least 100 million of them surround God's throne in heaven and are in constant praise of His majesty.

• They comforted Jesus during His trials on earth and comfort redeemed man as well.

• They fight battles in the heavenlies in order to bring answers to the prayers of God's people.

• Some angels are priests of the Most High God, while others are warriors.

• There may be a difference in kind and duty between the "angel of the Lord" and the "angel of God's presence.

• Archangels that are named in the sixty-six books of the Protestant Bible include Michael and Gabriel. In the Apocrypha, they include Raphael and dozens of other names.

• Satan is also named in the Bible. He is one of the more powerful heavenly beings - a guardian Cherub (Genesis 3:24), although some scholars believe that he is part of the highest order - a Seraph.

• God gave man authority over the earth, but lost it to Satan when they believed his lies and sinned against God. Jesus wrested Satan's authority from him when He died on the cross and returned it to His followers.

• Some scholars believe that angels are divided into a hierarchy of purpose and authority called "Choirs" or "Orders". These include Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Principalities, Archangels and Angels.

• Fallen angels also seem to operate from a hierarchy of responsibility and authority.

• Jesus referred to the devil as a murderer, liar and the father of lies. However, since Jesus defeated him on the cross, his game now is all bluff and bluster. His influence over redeemed man comes about when we believe his lies and yield to his temptations.

• Satan masquerades as an angel of light, blinds the minds of men so that they cannot see the truth and performs counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders so as to deceive mankind.

• Satan gives special attention to ruining the effectiveness of those who serve the purposes of God in their generation (Acts

13:36).

• At the end of time on earth, it is likely that it is Satan who will incarnate himself as the anti-Christ.

• Demons are likely the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim (the giants), who serve the purposes of Satan.

• They can “demonize”, “afflict”, or “oppress” a Christian and afflict a non-believer so completely that the Bible sometimes refers to it as “demon possession”. Such possession or oppression usually has to do with a “degree of influence” rather than spatial inhabitation.

• Demons can be cast out by faith-filled, mature believers “in the name of Jesus” - meaning, by the authority, power and character of Jesus.

• They can also recognize those who try to cast them out who do not know Jesus (Acts 19:13-16).

• Scripture seems to indicate that angels participate in a “divine counsel” in heaven where God gives them the honor of issuing rulings on the created order. As long as their decisions are consistent with God's purposes, God allows such decrees to proceed. This council includes twenty-four elders who sit on thrones in heaven - probably the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel plus the twelve apostles. Satan also seems to be a participant in this council, though may no longer since he was cast out of heaven.

• Some communions (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, etc.) pray to angels for assistance while others (Protestants) do not.

• Some of them are “servant reapers” of the earth on judgment day, separating the evil from the righteous.

• Angels always see the face of the Father in heaven - the “beatific vision” (Matthew 18:10). This may explain why the fallen angels seemed to have received a quick and final judgment when they sinned. They did so with full knowledge of God.

• Though spirit beings, angels can take on human bodies and can appear and disappear at will.

• In the Book of Revelation, God uses His angels to lead the Apostle John through a myriad of terrifying visions that reveal what will happen during the time just prior to and for just over a thousand years after the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Knowing his time is short, Satan pours out his wrath upon the earth (Revelation 12:12).

In the astonishing tableau of scenes, God's faithful angels are key participants in the final battle between good and evil. As Satan and his cohorts try to destroy and deceive the peoples of the earth, God pours out His wrath on those who refuse to repent of sin.

Finally, Satan and all his hosts are cast into the lake of fire, there to be tormented day and night for all eternity (Revelation 20:10).

Epilogue

"For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come," but it was Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.… For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
(Hebrews 2:9, 16–17)

It is good that we have taken the time to learn about the angelic hosts, both good and bad. The bad take advantage of our sin, to put us into bondage to sin, but the good help us, through the merits of Christ, to be set free from the tyranny of sin - that is, if we truly want to be.

The good lead us to the Savior, who has all power in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). And as with His first disciples, He has promised to confer upon all who would follow Him power and authority to overcome all the power of the evil one and his angelic/demonic hosts (Luke 10:19). It's an offer we shouldn't refuse!

Now that we know about the angelic realm, let's turn our focus on the One who created all things. Yes, He uses angels to carry out His purposes in creation. Yes, He uses men toward the same end. But our focus is and should always be, ultimately, God Himself, and the intimate relationship that He calls all believers to enjoy with Him.

In John 10:10, Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full!"

John Paul II once wrote: "Man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for Himself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself." That "gift of self" must first be given to God, through Jesus Christ, and then to our fellow man.

Through all our trials and tribulations, we may sometimes feel as if God has abandoned us. We are broken. We suffer tragedies and persecutions. We are tempted, with little power of our own to do anything about it. We pray for things and often hear no answer. We hate ourselves for our failings and can't imagine that a holy God wouldn't hate us as well. But consider this - would a God who hated us, die for us?

The problem is, in all our trials and tribulations, we tend to lean on our own

understanding rather than trusting in the authority and veracity of God's Word and His promises (Proverbs 3:5-6; Matthew 4:4).

Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
(Romans 8:17-18)

It has taken many thousands of years for all men to be given the choice between serving God and serving the devil. But once everything has reached its summation, it'll be game, set and match. God wins! And if we have surrendered our life to Him, we also win!

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment - to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.
(Ephesians 1:7-10)

At the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God won the day. The rest has been a matter of playing out that victory according to a divine timetable that provides everyone with a choice to choose Christ.

Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.
(Isaiah 40:31)

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged……for there is a greater power with us than with (the evil one)……with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.
(2 Chronicles 32:7-8)

Joshua 1:9 adds: “For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

If I am reading Bible prophecy correctly, Jesus Christ will be returning sooner than we think - probably in the lifetime of most everyone reading this. It will be a day filled with glory and wonder and it could happen at any moment.

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet!
(Romans 16:20; Genesis 3:15)

When the High Priest asked Jesus whether or not He was the Messiah, He replied…

I AM! And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the

Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.
(Mark 14:62)

In Revelation 1:7-8, it says……

Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen.

I (Jesus) am the Alpha and the Omega, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty!

But until that day……

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved… for salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.
(Acts 2:21; 4:12)

For those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, evil will soon be banished, as will all suffering and pain.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.
(Revelation 21:4)

With God we will gain the victory, and He will trample down our enemies.
(Psalm 108:13)